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QUEEN ANNE
AND HER COURT

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Queen Anne

Photo by Emery Walker, after a painting in the National Portrait Gallery by John Closterman

QUEEN ANNE
AND HER COURT

BY
P. F. WILLIAM RYAN

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CHAPTER XXIV

STANDING at her casement in St. James's Palace, a lady, careworn far beyond her seven-and-thirty years, looked out over the Park, glittering under the sun of a lovely spring morn of the year 1702. In that old palace had come to her many a change of fortune. It had witnessed the joys and griefs of her childhood; in its galleries she had played with Mary; through its shadows she had often stolen to the tiny bed of little Isabelle; there had her brother been ushered into history; and now to St. James's had come the message that during long years she had longed for, the message which she had of late feared would never come.

The careworn lady was Anne Stuart, already for one full minute Queen of England.

For the blue of the sky, clear this morning as some wondrous enamel, for the alluring green of the Park the Queen had no eyes. In the rush of thought, the tide of tumultuous emotions, she could not think or speak. She was oblivious of the lady-in-waiting—was Her Majesty! The

title was palpitating in every beat of her heart; it shot to and fro through her brain with maddening iteration.

At Kensington Palace the King had just gasped his last breath. The gods in the end were cruel to him. He ought to have expired upon a battlefield. But he, who so often had borne the shock of the legions of France, had met his death in a leisurely canter over the turf at Hampton Court.

Throughout the night Anne had kept vigil at St. James's with her ladies while the sands of William's reign ran out. For some days she had known that his life was in danger. On Saturday, March 7, the Princess had sent a message to Kensington Palace begging permission to see the dying King. With the tomb opening to receive him, William of Orange was, as ever, indomitable. Heaven might demand of him his life, might lay all his most cherished plans in confusion; but his will was his very own; and while one feeble pulse stirred within his veins there was no power of gods or men could quench his pride. His reply to the Princess's request was a stern "No," short and sharp as his feeble strength could frame it. He had only just passed his fiftieth year, but looking upon the emaciated figure labouring for breath against the cruel asthma, one might have thought William of Orange

were a hundred. Born for deeds from which generous youth must ever recoil, this man of destiny was never young. Chosen by Fate to accomplish the ruin of his kindred, he was moulded for his task in his mother's arms, and went straight forward to the goal—to victories that brought no joy, to this deathbed hallowed by neither tears of love nor of pity, nor the prayers of devoted lieges. His very sins were not those which somehow endear. The Princess in her anxiety sent Prince George to see the doomed monarch. But for him, no more than for his wife, was there admission. William hated them while living, dying he would have none of them. And Anne, all the time, was racked with apprehension lest some plot fatal to her prospects was being hatched in the chamber of death. Saturday night came. Right on through the lonely hours the lights burned in St. James's. The mistress of the Palace could not close her eyes. She had waited too long for this night to miss the instant in which would come the great tidings.

Every hour couriers reached St. James's from Kensington. The message was always the same:

"The King is dying!"

That word "dying." If only succession came otherwise! But there was mourning everywhere.

For her there was no escape from it. With it these last years were in her mind's eye all tapestried.

At last came this announcement, blunt to the verge of gladness:

"The King's breath grows shorter!"

Again and again this message reached St. James's. Anne's ladies at length ceased to trouble her with the news. It was more than she could endure, for dull she was indeed if her thoughts did not leap forward to the day when courtiers would in the same way watch her last agony, and post to her successor each symptom of the approaching end.

Early in the morning came the courier of couriers. Who says men's thoughts are not written on their brows! When comes a great emergency—no need for words. Before a syllable was uttered, before one there had time to fall upon his knees before her, she knew that everything was changed. Henceforth she could not breathe a wish but it was a command. She was the Queen.

The only eye there which for a moment was dimmed was Lady Churchill's. It was not because of her delight in the elevation of her mistress, who had been the most indulgent of Princesses. It was for William of Orange. Strange tribute was this from tyrant to tyrant.

It was the sympathy of granite for granite. Victory, defeat, riches, poverty, pride, humiliation, and even death itself, had no terrors for Sarah Churchill. But William was her kin. They had hated each other, injured each other, thwarted each other. But in their hearts each knew that the other was fired by the same spirit. The King was gone. He was vanquished. It was the fortune of war. And the Countess, to her finger-tips a soldier, gave him a brave soldier's due. She was sorry for him for a moment. But if a word could raise him from the dead, she would not speak it. A new era had been born for more than Anne Stuart. The favourite that ruled her was assuredly above the Throne.

There is no solitude for a Queen. Over from Kensington Palace, where the heart that had never known content rested, and from all quarters of the town, nobles and politicians trooped. Each one was greedy for his turn to enter the presence-chamber, and to murmur to Her Majesty the word of flattery that had been laboriously shaped and re-shaped in the ante-chamber.

One of the first of her subjects to pay her homage was her old lover, the Marquis of Normanby. Despite the ravages of time and incessant campaigns, no longer against the Moors, but

in pursuit of pleasure, the Marquis was still handsome and débonnaire, with the sparkle in his eye of one who, loving the world well, found it loved him too. Anne hardly knew what to say to him. But speak she should.

"What a fine day it is!" she stammered at last; and as her eyes met his, one can well believe the blood started to her face; for here was a meeting which cast round their brief love-affair a subtle glamour, the romance of promise unfulfilled.

Glib of tongue, always master of himself, nothing could embarrass her old-time Romeo.

"Madam," he answered blithely, "it is the finest day I ever saw."

When in the days of King Charles he had wooed her at Windsor he had pictured her in the highest place, the place to which she had now attained; but only half the picture was realised. He could recall the other half, and smile to think how true and how false a prophet may be a lover's imagination. For in picturing Anne as Queen he had painted himself supporting honours that well became his princely air. Genial epicurean that he was, he could laugh about these honours that he had lost, just as he would have laughed had he won them, to his heart's content.

Normanby's flattering repartee made him the

hero of the levee. "The finest day he ever saw!" Such a reply was, they said, a shaft of wit as daintily feathered and deftly shot as though St. James's were Versailles. The Queen smiled. The compliment was perhaps lost upon her. She was thinking of other things. The Queen was not the same woman who had laughed so bravely as she had breasted the storm out there in the Park with Compton and Dorset. The indifference of these people shocked her. Those who owed most to the King made no pretence to mourning. It was Lord Jersey's wife who, throughout the night, had sent the ghoulish messages of the King's growing weakness. And yet she was the sister-in-law of Elizabeth Villiers and Lady Fitzharding, the former enriched and ennobled by William, the latter his spy in Anne's household. The part played by these ungrateful sycophants filled even Sarah Churchill with wrath, and moved her to say:

"I think I would lose the best employment at Court sooner than behave so odiously."

The haughty Sarah was not fashioned by Nature to play the part of hypocrite. But she, too, could dissimulate. And if Anne's brow was sad, and her lips set in an expression that had in it much of pride, but much, too, of weariness and disappointment, it was in part because some of the bitterest of the many

bitter truths she had learned had been taught by her ungrateful favourites. Her mind was shaking itself free from delusions. But many delusions remained. She was learning that the world was what it was, not what she would have it to be, with the petulance of a child-empress.

The obeisances of the brilliant crowd that made old St. James's so gay on that bright March morning could not efface the memory of her brother. She was a usurper. Normanby knew it; Sarah, Fitzharding, Essex, William's lord of the bedchamber, who was there to make the official announcement of his master's death, and all the rest of them knew it. What was that gossiping Bishop of Salisbury saying to the Duke of Atholl? "You are not thinking of the Prince of Wales, I hope, my lord"; and Atholl answered, "Not while Her Majesty lives." The Duke's answer was a mournful piece of flattery. It was a confession that the cavalier families were waiting for her death to see their hopes realised. Delusive hopes they were, but none the less melancholy for a queen to reflect upon on her succession day.

To her door amongst the train of nobles there came an old man, and of all the throng there was none who gained admission by the same passport. It was by virtue of his kinship to the Queen that he passed her threshold: for the visitor was her uncle, the Earl of Clarendon. The Earl had

long fallen upon evil days. The downfall of James turned topsy-turvy his only possible world. He could forgive James everything, because when the proudest influences in England were arrayed against his sister, James it was who was knight enough to do her justice. Clarendon could not forget this princely deed, which raised the Hydes to the level of the Blood Royal; and in all the vicissitudes of later days he ever set this act of youthful chivalry against the grievances he had suffered at the hands of his brother-in-law. His brother, Rochester, was too overbearing and grasping to be capable of self-sacrifice for any cause, even for the wedding-ring, which the bridegroom had to purchase with courage greater than that which effects a revolution.

To the lord-in-waiting Clarendon gave a message that was rank treason.

"I desire," he said, "admission to see my niece."

It was Clarendon's way of reminding her that over the water was the Prince of Wales, that this Court of hers was a mockery of sovereignty, and that the true Court of England was at St. Germains.

Anne was in no temper then for lessons in justice, conveyed through a curt phrase to an officer of her household. She had a long score to settle with Clarendon. When, fourteen years

before, she was racked with anxiety lest her father should discover her perfidy and at the eleventh hour confound her schemes, the grim mouthpiece of harsh, naked truth was Clarendon. While others deceived and flattered, he was brutally frank. Up to the very eve of her flight from the Cockpit, she could not shut out the advocate of filial duty. She was impatient of his rebukes then, but she could not escape from them. Now, however, times were changed. Her will was law; and if Clarendon were to pass from the antechamber into her presence, it would be not to admonish his niece, but to do homage to his Queen.

"If," she said, "Lord Clarendon will go and qualify himself to enter my presence, I will be glad to see him."

The qualification Anne demanded was the oath of allegiance, and so the lord-in-waiting told his lordship. But having braved the wrath of William and the rigours of the Tower for his fidelity to the exiled Stuarts, Clarendon was not likely to be daunted by the anger of Anne.

"No," replied Clarendon; "I come to talk to my niece. I shall take no other oaths than I have taken."

And, turning on his heel, he left the Palace without finding the opportunity which he had sought, of reminding Anne that this for her was

not a day of rejoicing. The watchful courtiers did not fail to note the shadow which Clarendon's coming cast across the presence-chamber. There were significant nods and cynical smiles, and a hundred subtle signs evinced their sympathy with Her Majesty. Lord Dartmouth, son of her father's old admiral, almost eclipsed Normanby's flash of loyal wit as he bowed low in homage.

"Madam," he said, "my joy on your accession is indeed without the least alloy."

This, from the gallant old sailor's son, moved the Queen to emotion. If only Clarendon had come with words like these to his niece, how much lighter would the Crown be, how much brighter the sun! The contrast between her kinsman's stern message and the stranger's courtly speech almost melted her in an access of self-pity.

But little time was there for introspection. Little time was there for self-pity or remorse. The Houses of Parliament were already sitting, though it was Sunday, voting loyal addresses to the new Queen. The Privy Councillors who had witnessed the death of William adjourned from Kensington Palace, to reassemble a little later at St. James's.

There was something deeply moving in the Queen's reception of her Privy Council for the formal acknowledgment of her sovereignty. To

those endowed with imagination and sympathy there were, despite her misdeeds, circumstances in that meeting which must have quickened every generous emotion. The Queen was clothed in deep mourning for her father. No need for mourning for her son. Every lineament of her countenance was indelibly stamped with sorrow for his loss. In her expression an air of command blended with one of weakness and dependence, which imparted to her an alluring femininity. Her sins had been great; but those petulant lips, the uncertain chin, were not marks of a great sinner, but of a woman whose sense of all this ceremony and pageantry was that of a schoolgirl rather than of a queen. When she spoke she won all their hearts—for the moment.

There was little honour amongst them, hardened politicians and intriguing placemen that they were. They had betrayed at discretion, purchased, and sold. They had been courtiers and renegades and conspirators as each part served its turn. But for this first meeting with the Queen, elevated as it was above the ordinary tide of affairs by a thousand memories, and legends, and traditions, carrying the history of their country back into the mists of remote antiquity, there was not perhaps one amongst them but felt some thrill of exaltation, that for one moment at least made them honest gentlemen.

It was a long day, almost as long as that other when Gloucester tumbled feverishly on his couch awaiting the call. During its weary hours she had only one interval for rest, and that was during divine service at the Chapel Royal, when Burnet preached an interminable sermon, and Anne would have been a saint if she did not rest instead of pray.

A spectacle to make young Gloucester cheer, had he been there, was enacted after the chapel service in the palace courtyard. The guard turned out under arms to receive the herald and pursuivants and their escort of Household Cavalry, come to proclaim Anne Stuart Queen of Great Britain and Ireland. There was a brave roll of drums and rattle of accoutrements. The trumpets were sounded, and their gay challenge rose flourishing over the Thames. The multitude assembled for this historic ceremony cheered lustily. From the palace windows, with Sarah of Marlborough close at hand, Anne no doubt smiled and bowed upon the loyal people, who cheered again, unconscious of the pregnant truth that here was a Sovereign created neither by force of arms nor by hereditary right, but by the will of the people. Grateful for her smiles, they "hurrahed" again. They pressed upon the soldiers, and the soldiers thrust them back. What right had they there—

the despised mob, tradesmen, and watermen, and 'prentices from the City! What had they to do with the making of Royalty, or the assumption of the Crown!

The herald in his gorgeous raiment had finished his proclamation and turned his horse's head towards the gates. The Queen had retired. The infantry stood still, while the cavalry spurred after their leader, reckless of the bones of the populace. And the populace, never weary of swords, and guns, and tunics of scarlet and gold, and the magnificence of Kings-at-arms, and their resplendent equerries, humbly followed the cavalcade to Charing Cross, and Temple Bar, and Cheapside, to hear the trumpets and the herald's flowing periods, and cheer themselves hoarse for their English Queen.

CHAPTER XXV

LITTLE more than a month passed from the date of Anne's succession until she was crowned in the Abbey. The day was April 23, the festival of England's patron saint. Never had the canonised warrior looked down upon a scene more full of story. Not a man amongst the great officers of the Court but had borne the stress and storm of a generation of turmoil, of which the latest heroine was a queen whose part was sadly unheroic.

Shortly before William's death the defeat of the Tories at the polls had encouraged the King to make changes in the Ministry. Lord Godolphin had been replaced in the Treasury by Charles Howard, Earl of Carlisle; Sir Charles Hedges by Charles Montague, Earl of Manchester, lately ambassador in France; while Rochester had received notice that he would be required to vacate the Viceroyalty in Dublin.

Anne had signalised her accession by no sweeping changes. The proud Cavendish, now Duke of Devonshire, who had chastised Colepepper

in the galleries of Whitehall, was made Lord Steward of the Household. The Earl of Jersey was appointed Lord Chamberlain, for always, by some lucky combination of influences, the Villiers family managed to withstand the hostility of the implacable Sarah. Sir Edward Seymour, one of the leading Tories in the Commons, famous for his boast to William in the days of the Revolution, that the Duke of Somerset was "of his family," was made Comptroller of the Household. The Earl of Nottingham, the "Don Dismalo" with a conscience, was made a Secretary of State, having for his colleague William's lately dismissed minister, Sir Charles Hedges.

Most important of all was the appointment of Lord Godolphin as Lord Treasurer. Godolphin was the choice of the Marlboroughs. They had two ends to accomplish. The first, and that of immeasurably the most consequence, was to establish firmly their own autocracy. Godolphin was one of their household. His son and heir their son-in-law; his ascendency theirs. As Lord Treasurer, Godolphin was Prime Minister, with the power of the golden key in one hand and in the other half the patronage of the realm. Sarah's old grudge against Rochester was likewise avenged by obtaining the Treasury for Godolphin. Rochester had blamed her years before for draining Anne's resources. Now the great prize which

From an engraving by J. Houbraken.

SIDNEY, FIRST EARL OF GODOLPHIN.

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would be the crown of his career was in the arena. To secure it he would have given years off his life. But the Countess of Marlborough willed it otherwise—so did her docile Earl ; and Rochester was condemned to remain Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

The Lord Privy Seal was entrusted to the Marquis of Normanby. The day of William's death was indeed the finest day he had ever seen, for soon the Marquis of Normanby was made by his lady-love of long ago Duke of Buckinghamshire. The Lord Presidency of the Council was conferred on the Tory Earl of Pembroke, an old colleague in Mary's reign of the Duke of Leeds. The chief of the great officers who had been dismissed were William Bentinck, Lord Portland, and Lord Wharton. The former, who was William's especial favourite amongst the Dutch colony, was equally detested by the Queen and Lady Marlborough. William had lavished on him wealth and honours. Anne at once deprived him of his agreeable billet as Keeper of Windsor Park, and installed in the post the Countess of Marlborough. On Wharton the Queen inflicted the humiliation of taking from his hands the white staff of Comptroller of the Household, which, before his eyes, she handed to Sir Edward Seymour. Wharton retired with threats of vengeance, and was henceforward one

of the clique of politicians who made the Queen's reign a continual torment.

Young as Anne was, infirmity had already made it impossible for her to endure in all its details the fatigue of the elaborate ceremonial of the Coronation. Her Majesty, because of the gout, had to use a sedan-chair for the short journey from St. James's to Westminster Hall. From here to the Abbey she was carried in procession, her chair preceded by Prince George, gorgeous, but perhaps not quite content, in the raiment of generalissimo of all the Queen's forces. In the pageant he was but the first of the Sovereign's subjects—condemned, for some inscrutable reason, to share in none of the dignities of his wife, not even under the modest title of Prince-Consort.

Princes of the Blood Royal none were there, save the proud Duke of Somerset, who, ever conscious of his Tudor lineage, carried himself like a king. The Duchess of Somerset was one of the Queen's train-bearers, for, though Her Majesty could not walk, that the great dame whose right it was to fill the office might not be disappointed, the train was passed over the back of the Royal chair. How the Countess of Marlborough must have envied her that distinguished place in the procession! The Duchess, as proud of being a Percy as her

husband was of his descent from Henry VII. passed along as imperturbable as though she were strolling through her own park at Sion House, where the Duke of Somerset, contemptuous of William's wrath, had given Anne an asylum in the days of her tribulation. On either side of the railed footway, carpeted with blue cloth for the Queen's progress to the Abbey from Westminster Palace, the people crowded in dense masses, cheering thunderously as the procession slowly advanced. There were few amongst that vast audience who did not know the story of the stately Duchess. From the elder the younger ones heard what blood had been spilled by reckless gallants covetous of her hand and patrimony. When but a child of ten she had been married into the Newcastle branch of the Cavendishes. At thirteen she was a widow, *la triste héritière* of the Court of Charles II. Her next husband was a notorious rake of the period, Thomas Thynne, whose enormous wealth was adequate to the wildest extravagance. Brief again was the union; and while still little more than a child Elizabeth Percy was a second time a widow. This time her mourning was due to a crime committed in London, accounts of which rang through Europe, for its author came of a family known in every capital. The bride had been taken away from her husband by her mother

to Brussels, where she had the misfortune to attract the notice of one of the most notorious gallants of the Continent, Count Königsmark. The German adventurer was smitten with charms which appealed to his appetite for pleasure with all the irresistible force of an immense fortune.

True, she was Thynne's betrothed. But the Count employed a rough-and-ready law of divorce. He hired three assassins, by whom Thynne was murdered in the Haymarket. The noble paymaster escaped punishment; but the ruffians expiated their crime on the gallows. One of them, a fellow named Vratz, possibly a countryman of the Count's, furnished the mob at his execution with sport much to their taste. Upon the scaffold he excused himself for not showing penitence on the plea that God would never damn a gentleman for not humbling himself. Elizabeth Percy was only fourteen when she had experienced this series of matrimonial adventures. Now, as chief train-bearer in the Queen's Coronation procession, she was a woman advanced in life, whose sedately regal, yet feminine air bespoke the quality of her breeding. There was no more haughty dame in England, and of manners none more gentle. The charm of the Duchess, whose influence during Anne's reign was to be scarce inferior to that of Sarah Churchill herself, was that of late

From an engraving by J. Thomson, after the painting by Sir Peter Lely.

ELIZABETH, DUCHESS OF SOMERSET.

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autumn in mood of unclouded serenity. The charm of her companions behind the Queen's chair was that of the radiant spring-time. First of these was the Duchess's daughter, Lady Elizabeth Seymour, doubly proud because in her veins ran the blood of Percy and Seymour. Next came the Queen's first cousin, Lady Mary Hyde; and the youngest of her Grace of Somerset's three assistants was a damsel of thirteen, a rose-bud awakening to the sun. Her bright, childish face struggled to be demure in droll imitation of the great Duchess. It was unattainable perfection. The girl's bashful smiles came and went like the sun of that April day. The young lady was Lady Mary Pierrepoint, afterwards Lady Mary Wortley Montague, whose pen was to depict so engagingly the salons of the period.

In the procession there was no sign that it was the festival of a revolution marking the uprise of the empire of the people and the obsequies of "divine right." To the ordinary eye it was what it had been for centuries—a feudal ceremonial. The Lord Treasurer was not of much account there, nor his colleagues of the Council as representing the dependence of the Sovereign on her ministers, nor did people see in Harley, Speaker of the Commons, the representative of the sovereignty of the future. For

these few hours mediæval England was restored, and rank and precedence and power were what they had been three hundred years before. In these centuries the Tudors had broken the power of the nobles. The nobles had betrayed the Stuarts. Between kings and nobles the people had arrived at the threshold of their dominion, but the people did not know it as with open-mouthed admiration they revelled in the pageantry.

When the procession had entered the Abbey in triumph and all had taken their places, the hoary walls framed a gorgeous picture glowing with colour, quick with life, as from the brush of some giant of his craft. Glancing over that brilliant muster of gallant and gentle, brave and fair, the one who of all others fascinates is a dame who symbolises neither the power of ancient barons nor the coming kingdom of the people. She stands for something older than the one, something that will live with the other, something that will not die while human nature survives—the influence of the favourite over the ruler, the influence of the despot behind the Throne. Who could that dame be but Sarah, Countess of Marlborough, Sarah of the fearless heart, the iron nerve, the ruthless temper! Foremost amongst the courtiers was Marlborough, still in the prime of life, his breast ablaze with

Orders, his fame soon to be on the lips of all Europe. But what could he be without his ally and consort! Her jewels glisten right royally, but not so brightly as the eyes that flash disdain on Percy and Seymour, Montague and Howard, Neville and Cavendish.

It was with a mighty shout courtiers, Peers, and Commons cried out, "God save Queen Anne"! when the Archbishop of Canterbury proclaimed:

"Sirs, I here present to you Queen Anne, undoubted Queen of this realm, whereof all of you that are come this day to do your homage and service—are you willing to do the same?"

The arches of the old abbey echoed to that fervent shout, the Queen facing the while north, south, east, and west, that all might see and know her. The trumpets swelled into a victorious blast, vibrating through the chapels and echoing round the tombs of the many dynasties. Poor was the heart that was not thrilled by that brazen music, and gloomy the sternest Jacobite in the tiers of grandees who did not feel that Pillage has its pomp and glory, that clothed in golden cope and hailed with triumphal music it may be mighty fine to look upon.

There was still the sermon, no doubt the tedious failure State sermons ever are. There

were the vows of the Queen, and the vows of her subjects, the one promising to uphold the laws, the other to uphold the Sovereign. Seated in King Edward's chair, before the altar, every eye fixed upon her, she was anointed, and presented with the spurs of chivalry. Then stepped forward Aubrey de Vere, twentieth and last Earl of Oxford of his line, to gird Her Majesty with the sword. De Vere came of a race that had fought by the side of the Saxon kings, that had been leaders at the Court of Plantagenets, and had carried their banner to the Holy Lands. On through the centuries the De Veres had been foremost when England joined the fray by flood or field. For the red rose had they given of their blood, and under Tudor and Stuart the De Veres were still De Veres. The last of this race of gallant gentlemen, famous when Anne was but a babe as the most dashing of beaux, the most reckless of gamesters, redeemed for one hundred shillings the sword which he had buckled to the Queen's side, and, unsheathing the blade, carried it before her during the rest of the ceremonial. There was no De Vere to unsheath that sword in the generations to come. Why should there be, when that blade had been drawn for the last of Britain's ancient line of Kings?

They vested the Queen in her purple robes,

placed the wedding-ring of England upon her finger, and handed orb and sceptre to the bride of the Nation.

The Crown remained. She had seen it nearly topple from her father's brow on his Coronation day less than twenty years before. This Queen, so bravely arrayed, had her superstitions. Heaven grant the diadem to-day would not have to be saved from falling by another Sydney! Ah! It was over, thank goodness! There was no omen. It rested on her brow steadily and securely, just as though she were born to it. Born to it! There was a sting in that thought. But away with casuistry. The Archbishop had anointed her. The Peers had vowed homage to her. The Commons had cried "God save her." The people outside were applauding her. Surely the good God would not hold her, a weak, ignorant woman, accountable for what all these men, strong, and brave, and accomplished as they were, had approved! . . .

But something happened to arrest her thoughts if they were wandering into the gloomy regions of memory. They had reached the final supplication. She listened with bursting heart.

"The Lord preserve your life and establish your Throne, that your reign may be prosperous and your days many; that you may live long in this world, obeyed and honoured and beloved by

all your people; ever increasing in favour both with God and man; and have a numerous posterity to rule these kingdoms after you by succession in all ages."

It was like a funeral prayer. It was somehow like what she had heard above the bier of Gloucester—like, and unlike. A numerous posterity indeed! Mary, Anne, Sophia, William, George, and the other babes who had stayed with her too brief a time to have a name, had all gone. Their dust was close by; their shades had trembled at the trumpets—had, perhaps, wondered at this strange orison over this lady, so richly coped and adorned with such glistening bravery.

Back to Westminster Hall to the banquet, without which is complete no great Anglo-Saxon rite. Anne sat down with her nobles. There was an ordeal before her which made her ill at ease. It was the ceremony of the challenge by the Queen's champion. Clothed in armour, Charles Dymoke entered the Hall and threw down the gauntlet of defiance to the Queen's enemies. At her sister Mary's Coronation an old woman had hobbled out of the gloom, taken up the gauntlet, and left behind a lady's glove, in which was a note appointing a time and place of meeting in Hyde Park; but Dymoke did not attend the rendezvous. More fortunate than

her sister, no old woman tottered out of the shadow this April evening to seize upon Dymoke's gauntlet, and the Queen ate her meat and sipped her wine without discomfiture.

The bonfires had begun to burn, the illuminations that made London one blaze of light to glow, before the Queen left Westminster for St. James's. In every belfry the bells were ringing, and it was amidst the acclamations of the people who thronged the route that she reached the Palace.

There was only one thing more—for "the generalissimo of all the forces" to toast the Queen and her friends in the Palace Banqueting Hall. It was a long toast, and the poor Queen grew weary, as humbler wives will, when the decanter bustled along too merrily.

Jersey hinted to Prince George that the Queen would be glad if he would propose retiring. Wine and victory had for once made His Highness's tongue equal to the occasion.

"I propose!" exclaimed the Prince, laughing in the face of the Lord Chamberlain. "I cannot. I am Her Majesty's subject—have done and sworn homage to her to-day; I shall do naught but what she commands me!"

Anne was mightily entertained at the retort, for not often did her consort acquit himself so glibly.

"Then, George," said Her Majesty, "as that is the case, and I am very tired, I do command you to come to bed."

Faithful to his allegiance, the Dane rose. The table was inviting indeed, richly laden with the choicest vintages of France and the Peninsula. But a Queen's husband must be courageous in retreat as in attack. And, obedient to Her Majesty's mandate, he followed the path of self-denial to the Royal bedchamber, through the ranks of the bowing courtiers.

That morsel of comedy was not the only one which brightened Anne's Coronation day. At Westminster Hall the spirit of broader drollery was in possession. While George was toasting his Queen and friends, and while his friends were toasting Anne and George, there was another joyous party assembled at Westminster Hall. There were gathered the flower of London's army of rogues. They emptied the bottles and picked the bones left over from the banquet, and when they had done they packed up the plate and pewter and table-linen and marched off with their booty through the last of the cheering mobs, who no doubt gave the gentlemen carrying the Queen's baggage a lusty round of applause.

Heartily as Anne had laughed at George's merry jest, her mirth was as nothing to that of

her subjects when they heard next morning that the Crown dinner-service was gone. And here and there a daring wit would ask a sullen Whig which was the bigger sin—to steal the King's knives and forks and napery, or steal the King's Crown!

CHAPTER XXVI

"IT is a sign I am growing old when women make war against me!"

Thus laughed Louis XIV. to his courtiers when news reached him that his little friend of thirty odd years before, now crowned Queen of England, had thrown down to him the gauntlet.

For the first time for half a century England was an independent factor in the scheme of European politics. The day of Louise de Querouaille was passed. Barillon had no longer a Sunderland to corrupt. The country had ceased to be an appanage of Holland. She stood alone with her destiny in the hands of Queen and ministers.

France had now reached a point when the proudest dreams of Louis were well-nigh realised. He had not restored the Empire of Charlemagne; but an Empire as magnificent was within his grasp; for his grandson, Philip of Anjou, second son of the Dauphin, had been acknowledged King of Spain, and accepted with acclamation by the great dependencies of the Spanish monarchy.

From a contemporary engraving

LOUIS XIV.

p. 404.

Such a scene as Louis loved to see enacted marked the day on which young Philip was proclaimed Sovereign of Spain. It was a piece of classical drama—cold, majestic, symmetrical. One morning the Court was summoned to the presence-chamber at Versailles. When the splendid audience was assembled, every peer and dame, every squire and page filling to the inch due place in the scale of precedence, Louis advanced to Philip and made in half a dozen words a speech which converted Western Europe into one vast battlefield.

"Gentlemen," he said, "behold the King of Spain!"

Thus was the will of Charles II. of Spain accepted by Louis. Charles had named Philip as his heir, and failing Philip, the universal Spanish monarchy was to pass to Charles, Archduke of Austria, second son of the Emperor Leopold and brother of the young King of the Romans, which was then the lofty title borne by the heir of the Hapsburgs. Not lightly was the House of Austria going to surrender its claims to the vacant Throne of Spain, with its kingdoms and principalities in the old world, and in the new Empires rich beyond the wildest dreams. The Emperor at once recalled his ambassador from Madrid and prepared for war. He declined to abide by the will of the feeble-minded Charles,

who had but assented to the wishes of stronger intellects. Not for such a mandate would Leopold forgo the pretensions of his House. At the date of these events William of Orange still lived, but already Death walked with him. It chilled his Court. It repelled flatterers. It warned statesmen to prepare for the changes of the future, and left them no ardour for the plans of a prince who would soon be far away, making the voyage on the spectral ship.

As William's health declined, his influence on English politics vanished. The country was tired of him and of his Dutch favourites. In the Netherlands his ascendency, which was never altogether unchallenged, was towards the end of his stormy life irrecoverably on the wane. To William, as the trusty standard-bearer of the Empire in its wars with France, looked Leopold. But William's sword had done its part in the red flood of history, and in a little while its master was no more.

His death changed everything. Yesterday the politics of England were the politics of Orange; the key to every move, fear of French aggression. To-day that fear had ceased to be a supreme principle of action. The England of Anne, secure within the circle of the ocean, could view without anxiety the swift turn of the wheel of fortune which made the Spanish Netherlands, in

a sense, a province of France, and its garrison a menace to the liberties of the Dutch. There was no urgent reason why the Emperor should not have been left to fight his battle with Louis, while English statesmen applied themselves to the service of their own country. And so, in all probability, would it have happened but for the Earl of Marlborough and the King of France. The Earl wanted war. It was for him the only avenue to glory. And Louis, indifferent to Marlborough, contemptuous of England, made the mistake of his life.

On the death of James II. he had acknowledged the young Prince of Wales as James III. It was generous of Louis to flout England for a poor exile. But diplomacy could have made his generosity more seasonable, with inestimable advantage to the unfortunate son of Mary Beatrice, and with results for France which, to contemplate, mean effacing from one's mind half the history of the modern world, and re-creating a Europe to which the names of Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet would conjure up no reminiscences of immortal valour.

The contradictions which minute analysis discovers in the fairest edifice of truth, the strain of inconsistency which is sometimes not wholly masked by the most rigid consistency, the illogical premises which often cross-cut the nicest logic,

were all now exemplified in the action of Queen Anne's Government. The first great issue which had to be decided was that of peace or war. And the verdict was for war.

Throughout the land there was scarcely a politician who did not look forward to the time when the Prince of Wales would come to his own. To the majority it seemed only a question of striking a bargain. Parliament, at an opportune moment, would offer terms. It would impose conditions, stringent conditions, which would for ever curb the autocratic temper of the Stuarts. Over these terms the Prince might haggle, but in the end he should accept them; for who could believe that he would choose poverty and humiliation in preference to the Crown of his ancestral kingdom? But this should be a treaty of peace between Englishman and Englishman. The menace of French bayonets should be absent from the negotiations. The acknowledgment of the Prince as King of England by Louis spoiled everything, by uniting all England against the champion of an English Prince whom his countrymen were beginning to pity in his misfortunes; while signs were manifest that in time he would be the object of feelings more cordial.

Had Louis denied to young James, after his father's death, the empty title of King and the

shadow of regality, he would have hastened his possession of the substance of power. Marlborough, too, would have been baffled in his effort to commit Anne's first Ministry to the Orange tradition of implacable hostility to France. Often must Louis have regretted a generous impulse which destroyed the hopes of the Prince whose misfortunes had inspired it—an impulse which enabled Marlborough to prove his mettle as one of the world's greatest captains.

The members of the Government were not, however, unanimous for war. Of the party which shrank from thrusting England into the foremost place in a great continental broil, the chief was Rochester. He was still Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. But that post he regarded as respectable exile. From his niece he had hoped for better things; but improvement in his fortunes was hopeless while the Marlboroughs were supreme with Anne, their lady-deputy. Entrusting the duties of his office at Dublin Castle to lords-justices, he hastened to London in time for the Council which was to decide the policy of the Queen in this momentous crisis.

Rochester, as an opponent of extreme measures, could claim to be consistent, though his motives could not, perhaps, emerge triumphantly from a test purely patriotic. When towards the close of William's reign he was recalled

to power, with Godolphin, Nottingham, Hedges, and other Tories, he had steadfastly opposed William's desire for war. His supporters then had included all the leading ministers. His party was unanimous. Now he stood almost alone. He could not, however, taunt his former allies with vacillation. Since they had thwarted William everything had changed, and their judgment had to be modified by a wholly new set of factors.

At home they had now an English queen, and there was no danger that the victories purchased with English blood would go to enrich foreigners, and strengthen a continental State which had in the past been a dangerous enemy and was still a formidable trade rival. Abroad Louis had receded from the understanding arrived at in the Treaty of Ryswick. He had then agreed to recognise William as King of England. Now he had flouted William's successor and paid Royal honours to her brother at St. Germains. It was an act of sovereign contempt for Queen Anne, which no Ministry could tamely endure without seeming to acquiesce in the implied censure on their mistress for her part in the exclusion from his rights of the Prince of Wales.

No servant of the Crown could justify the conduct of Louis or give it any other complexion than one of deadly insult towards Anne.

It was not necessary, however, for Marlborough's enemies to assume a position which would have inevitably entailed their dismissal from office. It was only necessary to argue against England embarking on vague continental adventures. The ocean was England's proper battlefield; it was the domain where in the long run she had ever triumphed. The coast towns of France and French shipping offered an easy prey to the ravages of British squadrons. Why, then, overwhelm the country with the burden of maintaining abroad an army whose task would only be finished when it had laid in ruins the power of France, now mistress of Western Europe from the Low Countries to the Mediterranean, and renewed with British valour the ancient vigour of the Holy Roman Empire?

Rochester, however, was no match for his adversaries. The logic of a position which would restrict to the sea the warlike enterprises of England was unanswerable. But an irascible and disappointed man, intolerant of opposition, he was defeated before he entered the Council Chamber. The stolidity of Godolphin, the lofty disdain of Somerset, the indifference of the spirited Devonshire, the caressing suavity of Marlborough, goaded him to exasperation. The Queen's uncle was the apostle of a hopeless cause. It was his destiny to reap high honours, but never

those he most coveted, and always to lose the battles in which he was fighting for his heart's desire. To be vanquished by Godolphin intensified a hundredfold the bitterness of defeat, for by some strange coincidence the unvarnished Cornish squire had ever profited by the other's disappointments. The success for which the one strained every nerve came to the other without an effort.

Promotion was thrust upon Godolphin; but it left him, though now verging on sixty, the same unobtrusive, taciturn, and tactful person, of whom the Merrie Monarch had said he was never in the way and never out of it. But if he had none of the brilliancy of the circle in which his lot was cast, he was endowed with a rugged strength of character and a courageous belief in himself and his own homely understanding, which amounted almost to genius, if genius can ever masquerade in guise so lustreless.

He had one other quality which recommended him to Marlborough: he had a standard of integrity. If Marlborough had none, he nevertheless knew its value in other people, and he had learned in the school of experience that Godolphin would not betray his banner until it was the certain symbol of a lost cause, nor desert his camp until it looked like becoming a prison. He could trust Godolphin. He knew it, for he could read him like an open book. There-

fore no man was so fit as he to be the Queen's First Minister; and when Her Majesty's Council declared for war, Marlborough knew that he would want for neither men nor money while his friend controlled the Treasury of England.

On May 4, less than two months after Anne had assumed the Crown, the heralds and pursuivants, with drummers and trumpeters and troopers of the Queen's Lifeguards, again descended upon Charing Cross. This time it was to publish to the citizens the declaration which threw down to France the gage of battle.

Now was the desire of Marlborough's heart fulfilled. The stage on which he had longed to measure his strength was at length thrown open to him. Wearily had he waited at the gates for his opportunity, wearily but always patiently. And now that it had come he had no misgivings. Genius spoke within him. He knew he could succeed, that he was born for conquest. There never was a Marlborough but had the gift of prophecy—prophecy derived from unerring judgment, and almost divine intuition to light his path to the end appointed by Fate. Confident that his hour had come, Marlborough encountered difficulties only to surmount them. The jealousies of princes, the objections of querulous allies, appeared only to vanish. Against his winning manners, his perseverance, quiet and irresistible

as a silently flowing river, no opposition, no diplomacy, could prevail. The Germanic Empire was falling to pieces. But at the magic touch of Marlborough the old Imperial spirit was revived, and this English adventurer, careless what master he served, so that he was lavish of honours and generous with his pay, marshalled for war the haughty vassals of Leopold. Holland, too, joined the alliance, and Marlborough, with the spirit of his beautiful, tempestuous Sarah ever near him, and in his heart the image of his adored son, started out to initiate the marshals of France into the art of war.

CHAPTER XXVII

WAS there ever so annoying a tale! Poor relations, indeed! Might she die at the stake if she ever knew that one of her breed wanted a guinea! Half of the wenches about the Court did not know who their grandfathers were. And nearer kin were unknown to more of them. But the plague take it if she did not think that every Jennings since Adam's day was an honour to an honoured name.

Once Sarah's tongue was loosened the pace quickened briskly to a gallop, and then it was gallop and gallop, until, awed by the torrent, the first speaker envied the mute their perpetual silence.

Chambermaids in her family! It would choke Sarah to repeat it. They who ought to be the mistresses of ancient manors, with more gold in their purses to trifle with than would keep their enemies in board and raiment for a lifetime! One can easily imagine it was in some such groove ran her thoughts on being told by one of her friends at Court that she had an uncle and

aunt in want, with one of her cousins a chambermaid, another a maid of some other sort, and two boys in rags. Having heard the story, she opened her purse—according to her own account of the incident—and handed over a dole to her informant for the relief of her destitute kindred.

But her kindness did not end with that dole. It only began there. Sarah sat down and thought over this misfortune which had so unexpectedly overtaken her, and which would so delight the hussies of the Court did they but hear of it. She could of course, if driven to it, box their ears, and possibly shut their mouths for the time being. But that would not alter the truth, would not make her poor relations great lords and ladies. What, then, was to be done with them? Pray she might that sudden and unprovided death would wipe out of existence the hapless family of her father's sister. But alas! Heaven never heard such prayers. It had its own wise designs for poor relations—designs generally accomplished in length of days.

The family whose misfortunes were so painfully obtruded upon the exalted Sarah was that of a City merchant named Hill, who had married her aunt, and who, in the course of trade, instead of attaining to affluence, became a bankrupt. The poverty-stricken Hill had four children to provide for—two sons and two daughters; and at

the time their necessities became so urgent as to need Sarah's assistance, Anne was still living at the Cockpit, and many a long year was to elapse before she should wear the Crown. But results more potent than those following many a famous victory attended the wound dealt to Sarah's vanity by the gentle damsel who assumed the post of their advocate. Well aware that her enemies would not allow her to forget the Hills, and that even her friends would be malicious enough to enjoy their existence, Sarah determined to accomplish their redemption. The broken father, the unhappy mother, were beyond such succour as a palace favourite could offer them. Soon the grave closed over them and their sorrows. The children remained, and Sarah looked around to see how she could place the forlorn orphans that they might not be a reproach to her own lofty station.

The eldest boy of the Hills was placed in the Customs. It was a safe harbourage for a ragged youth, in which genius could hardly advance his fortunes nor want of it mar them. By the younger boy, Jack Hill, luck dealt more kindly. He entered the service of Prince George as a page. A little while before, Jack's lanky figure, set off with rags, might have passed as a scarecrow. The rich habiliments of a page could not sharpen his wits, but they effected a transformation more

gratifying to his haughty patroness. In time Jack Hill became Groom of the Bedchamber to the young Duke of Gloucester, and, though in the opinion of Marlborough "good for nothing," the page's progress never ceased until he found himself chief of a brigade of Her Majesty's army.

More patience was needed for the task of providing for the young ladies whom the unfortunate merchant had bequeathed to his relations. Abigail and Alice were the names of the orphans towards whom Sarah assumed the office of guardian. Alice was given a minor place at Court when an opportunity arose, and her only share in the great events of the day consisted in waiting upon the leading actors. Not so Abigail. The time came when she filled first place in the affections of the Queen, when the fate of ministers hung upon her friendship, when she was to England and the Court what her patroness Sarah had once been. The Princess, beaten low with suffering, was by degrees drawn by some strange magnetism to the chambermaid who had eaten the bread of servitude, only to find herself, by some inscrutable vagary of fortune, the twin soul, the confidante, of the Queen of England, the chastened companion of the chastened.

Abigail's earliest service was that of a maid to

Lady Rivers, of Chafford, in Kent. From this quiet country-house the young girl was taken to be a nurserymaid to Sarah's children. The discomforts of that employment may be readily conjectured. Under such a mistress a servant should be either a slave or a rebel. Poor Abigail was not spared. What with the mother and the children, their unfortunate kinswoman seems to have been reduced to abject servility. Lady Marlborough paints her with all the defects bred by the stripes of fate and the coldness of the world. The poor girl had no gaiety, no enthusiasm, no airy prattle, no moods of petulance or exuberance. Mocked at by her fellow-menials for her fallen gentility, tyrannised over by her kindred, Abigail was always patient, always resigned. Assuredly spirit so compliant was meant for subjection. And in subjection would they keep her.

But kindly Heaven one day smiled on Abigail. This was a miracle indeed, that one so long cast away was still only a castaway, and not utterly lost and forgotten. The blood that had so long coursed through her veins cold and thin, responded to some novel impulse. Warmly it rushed to her heart. It glowed in her pallid cheeks. Hope had cast a spell upon her. Her eyes shone with light, making one forget her lack of beauty, and remember that she was really young.

Were they fooling her? A place for her at Court, for her who had sat at table with servants, a chambermaid, a nurserymaid! It sounded like an insane delusion. And yet there was her imperious cousin instructing her in her new duties. If misery had at length turned her brain, then welcome the madness which cheered her with such chimeras.

It was some three or four years before her accession that Anne permitted Sarah to introduce Abigail into her household. To Sarah's passion for filling with her minions every office in her mistress's establishment, whether great or small, Abigail owed her release from domestic drudgery. At this time Lady Marlborough had reached the age when a character as domineering as hers reveals itself in a thousand unexpected ways. No artifice can veil the masterful spirit. No effort of will can suppress it. Every lineament bears witness to its presence. She was approaching her fortieth year, a woman who had measured her strength against men, and had never been worsted. In dark places she had matured many of her schemes. But dark places were not of her choosing: they were forced upon her by the exigencies of tactics. Against concealment her imperious nature revolted; and power itself was robbed of half its sweetness unless she could exercise it in the full light of

day, where all could behold, and admire, or envy her. And whether the incense of admiration or the flattery of envy was most grateful to her, she herself could hardly say. Success had developed all that was most arbitrary and intolerant in her nature, until she could no more disguise her autocratic temper than she could the colour of her eyes, the set of her lips, or the tint of her hair. We have seen Sarah scolding at the Cockpit because James dared to rebuke the Princess for her extravagance. That was nothing new. No doubt there never was a time when she was afraid to quarrel with Anne. But there was a time when she quarrelled at discretion; when she went so far and no farther. But gradually discretion grew less and less, while self-will obtained ascendency so irresistible that by no ordinary effort could it be bridled.

But while the favourite's character was hardening to the complexion of its ruling qualities, Anne was not unchanged. The transgressions against good manners, which in early life Anne scarcely noticed, were in course of time secretly resented. But what vexed Anne, above all, was Sarah's ungovernable tongue, which respected neither ceremony nor etiquette, and which, whether the occasion was dignified or sacred, gay or melancholy, would have its turbulent fling. It grew to be the terror of the luckless

Princess, and in the end it goaded her to the rebellion which terminated its owner's career at Court. But there was a long road to travel before that day came, and then it was too late for the happiness of one or the punishment of the other.

Anne's comfortress along that tedious road was Abigail Hill. The soft-voiced damsel, so eager to please, so distressed at the subtlest sign of displeasure, however undeserved, timid as a country mouse amongst the great dames, appealed to some instinct in Anne akin to the maternal. She knew something of the trials which Abigail had borne. With what patience she had suffered was impressed upon her face. Anne felt she could trust this humble gentlewoman, in whom pride was as utterly dead as though she had lived a long life in a convent cell.

With marvellous adroitness Anne set herself to test her fidelity without exciting the suspicions of Sarah or the surprise of her servant. The tests were but trifles ; yet they answered their purposes. From them the new waiting-woman emerged triumphant, a paragon who knew when to hold her tongue. Soon the Royal lady was never better pleased than when this despised interloper, this poor relation, was left in attendance upon her. Sarah saw that it was so,

and approved, because she thought too meanly of her kinswoman to dream of her as a rival.

Who can identify a raindrop in the ocean? Who can tell the moment when love turns to hate and confidence to distrust? The incident which first shook Sarah's empire over Anne has been attributed, however, to a period shortly after Gloucester's death, when, smarting under the lash of implacable affliction, the slightest jarring word had power to re-open all her wounds, and make them bleed afresh. The roughest fellow in her service mourned for the bereaved mother, so manifestly overwhelmed by the first shock of her darling's loss. But the silent sympathy of the kitchen-maids and the grooms read no lesson in womanly tenderness to the Countess of Marlborough. Rich in the possession of her own handsome son, the spirited young Marquis of Blandford, and a thousand other gifts of fortune, she looked with disdain upon her stricken mistress, whom even God in His mercy would not spare. One afternoon Anne sent Abigail to the next room for her gloves. She remembered she had left them on the table. Abigail obeyed, to find that Lady Marlborough had put them on. Then, tradition says, the following dialogue took place:

"Madam, you have put on by mistake Her Royal Highness's gloves."

Sarah flew into a violent rage.

"Ah!" she cried, "have I put on anything that has touched the hands of that disagreeable woman? . . . Take them away!" And, suiting the action to the word, she flung them from her.

Picture Anne in the next room listening to this outburst of loathing from a woman on whom she had showered favours, whom she had made the custodian of her most dangerous secrets, whom she had leaned upon as a sister older and stronger than herself! And now, at a moment when she was so tried by affliction and so humbled by her political follies that the meanest varlet at the Court would have bitten off his tongue before adding to her sorrows, this friend of hers from childhood turned to rend her before her household. Anne listened to the tirade, then left the apartment by another door; and Sarah never knew she had ceased from that hour to be the Princess's favourite, that the gall of her tongue had withered the love for her, which, despite all her faults, had been cherished by her mistress as her chief consolation.

Abigail, however, knew, and she was silent as the grave. During the years that followed, Anne clothed her real feelings in an impenetrable disguise. It was supreme acting, with scarcely any relief from the pose she affected. How often must the impulse have assailed her

to be her real self, to speak what was in her mind, to act as she felt! But the mask was ever in its place, and when at last it was laid aside, it was only because Sarah's insults made further pretence unnecessary.

On the woman who had reviled her while Gloucester's dust was new to the tomb, she lavished honours at her coronation. All that Sarah desired she was welcome to have. Anne had found out her favourite. She knew that her greed, her ambition were insatiable. Her power in the State was in some respects more real than that of the Queen. It behoved Anne, therefore, to placate this rapacious personage; and, making a virtue of necessity, she played her part with such finesse that the elevation of Marlborough to a dukedom was the deceptive clue from which Sarah and the world had to judge of Her Majesty's feelings. How Sarah, blinded by pride to the truth, must have despised such a Queen, giving all, and reaping scorn instead of gratitude!

The Queen wished that the Commons should settle five thousand a year on the new Duke and Duchess, from the revenue of the Post Office. The Commons replied to Her Majesty that Marlborough's services, though great, had been sufficiently rewarded. That rebuff to the Captain-General may well have given his enemy

Rochester the most exquisite delight. It was a revenge which would be renewed every year as the Duke and Duchess balanced their accounts and missed that annual tribute from the revenue. It was a triumph for the extreme Tories, but one which cost them the lifelong enmity of Sarah, who declined to be mollified by the offer of two thousand a year from the Queen's privy purse. By refusing, like a spoiled child, the compensation which she coveted, the Duchess of Marlborough imposed on herself a piece of self-denial which made her life a continual torment and that of the Queen one comical round of misery, listening daily to the recital of imaginary wrongs and the vituperation of those who had inflicted them.

Ruled by her ministers, persecuted by a favourite who was feared even by the great general who "never lost a battle or raised a siege," the Queen's only refuge was in those hours of solitude allowed her with Abigail. The gentle waiting-woman loved music, as did Anne, and when the melancholy strains of the harpsichord floated dreamily through St. James's, the Duchess took her ease. The Queen was in safe keeping. It was only the serving-maid from Chafford lulling Her Majesty to repose—plain-faced, shallow-pated, mealy-mouthed, guileless Abigail!

CHAPTER XXVIII

HALF sullen, half melancholy no longer, Miss Hill sang to herself as she went about her duties at Court. At last the orphan of the bankrupt merchant had emerged from the shadow into the sun, and every chord of life thrilled with new and delicious harmony.

Of the girl's age there is no precise record. Daughters of the aristocracy generally left the schoolroom for the altar; and she who had passed twenty-five without being mated was reckoned something of an old maid, whose chances of a husband were very slight indeed. Abigail was, perhaps, no more than twenty-four in 1705, when her companionship was becoming indispensable to the Queen. But a spinster of twenty-four, without wealth, or beauty, or rank, or a reputation for either wit or gallantry, would receive no more attention at Court than a palace kitten. Thus, when Anne summoned Miss Hill to attend her she aroused no jealousies, for who would be jealous of one so mean? This was not Royal preference. It was a Royal

whim, and an excellent whim, too. For the Queen was the saddest woman at Court, and to the younger ladies, at least, it was a blessed miracle that she should entertain herself with the pensive Abigail while they enjoyed livelier intercourse in their own apartments. The children of the proudest nobles in England had nothing in common with the unhappy monarch who found in the bedchamber-woman her true affinity.

When Abigail answered the Queen's bell, it was with a ready smile, eloquent of joy in Her Majesty's service. For though as yet but a novice to her Sovereign's favour in comparison with the intimacy to which she was later to be admitted, she, nevertheless, knew well that the kindly mistress of the Palace was her friend, who, like herself, was afraid of nothing in the world so much as the tongue of her worthy cousin Sarah.

The portrait of Abigail has to be filled in from detached phrases and stories and letters that belong to no consecutive record. We know her best from what has been left unsaid. No page records the Queen's timid, half-uttered confidences, nor the waiting-woman's shy sympathy. The Queen sighed when Sarah had left her—sighed her relief. What could be more expressive? And Abigail sighing too, they looked

at each other, conversing with their eyes in a language to which the spies had no key. Had the walls ears they would have heard whispers to make Court memoirs racy. On the Queen's side it would be what Sarah said, what Sarah did, what soothed her and what ruffled. Had Sarah raised a hurricane in the Palace, then were the Queen's complaints poured forth to Abigail, and balm inestimably precious was the attendant's "Nay, madam," and "Yes, madam," and "ungrateful wretch," and "an insupportable shrew, madam." Anne did not want flattery. She had outlived it. What she did need was a friend she could trust, a woman with more of tenderness and sincerity than intellect, and here she was by her side, the gift of her tormentress.

Many years passed before Sarah ever suspected her kinswoman had dispossessed her from her place at Court. The change took place under her eyes, yet she did not see it. Still more wonderful is it that no bird whispered to Sarah of the Queen's preference for a bedchamber woman over all the great ladies who were in her service, or who thronged to her receptions at Kensington or St. James's, where often so dense was the crowd at her card parties that Her Majesty could hardly get at her purse for the guineas ever nimble to forsake her.

If those about the Queen's household were

blind to the meaning of the Royal condescension extended to Abigail, blind, too, were the politicians ; for with Abigail's rise to fortune a new influence was born which was to upset the calculations of them all. The Queen, at the outset of her reign, had countenanced the formation of a third party. The "Zarazians" —as they were called in the slang of the day by the enemies of the great Duchess—were to be her own party, the mouthpiece of the Court. Fond illusion that was soon to be dispelled. Happy the sovereign without a party, as poor Anne learned in travail. Hers took possession of her, body and soul, broke her will and her heart, and did not spare her purse. In seeking solace from Abigail, Anne was blindly preparing the way for the uprise of a new faction, and the unhappy Queen, when by-and-by her palace was turned into a battle-ground, realised too late that her second state was worse than her first.

Abigail was the ally who in time opened the way to the highest office in the State for Robert Harley, afterwards bearer of the ancient title of Earl of Oxford, so long the possession of the De Veres.

Harley stood, it is said, in the same relation towards Abigail's father that Sarah did towards her mother. It was, therefore, his cousin whom he recognised in the demure young Mistress Hill

whose attendance afforded the Queen so much pleasure.

At Anne's Coronation Harley was seen at the Abbey filling a distinguished place as Speaker of the House of Commons. He was a man of genial temper and moderate opinions, a master of parliamentary forms, and no less a master of intrigue. The benevolence of the Harleys does not seem to have been moved by the poverty which overtook Hill, the City merchant. If any sympathy was vouchsafed him from the ancestral mansion in Herefordshire, it brought little practical advantage, since the future of the children was left so entirely in the hands of Sarah. It must have been with much surprise, therefore, that the Speaker, when by-and-by promotion made him a courtier, learned of the good fortune of his orphan-cousin.

At first he knew her merely as a *protégée* of the Duchess, a person to be treated with discretion if noticed at all. But close acquaintance with the life of the Court opened the eyes of this astute observer to the Queen's partiality for his humble kinswoman. The Hills be blessed! Who would ever have thought a bankrupt would leave him such a legacy. If the girl was worth her salt he would make her fortune and his own, especially his own. And so exactly did it fall out when the web of his schemes was spun.

It was the Earl of Nottingham's revolt against Godolphin which created a vacancy for Harley in the Government. Don Dismalo's conscience was still a potent and uncertain factor in politics of the day. The Dissenters were now the cause of his Lordship's travail. They were defeating the penal laws by attending church at their convenience. This to the devoted Earl was sacrilege, to which he would put an end by getting passed into law the Occasional Conformity Bill.

Nottingham as the champion of the privileges of the Church of England had for his chief allies in the Government the Earl of Jersey, the Duke of Buckinghamshire, Sir Edward Seymour, and, above all, the Queen's uncle, the Earl of Rochester. Not all these, however, were such zealots for the Church as Nottingham. But they were party men, and this question stirred to its depths their High-Church friends in the country, where the clergy and the magnates esteemed themselves as twin pillars of one divine institution. Godolphin's judgment was open only to political arguments. To him it was a matter of indifference that a Dissenter should evade the penal laws by taking part occasionally in those rites which it was the general principle of his life to avoid like the plague. Marlborough was equally lukewarm. Theology had as little

attraction for him as for his Duchess. With the Lord Treasurer and the Captain-General the real issue was the war, and the aim of their policy so to conciliate Whig and Tory, so to manipulate the votes of Churchmen and Dissenters as to keep the legions of England in the field.

The incessant wrangles in the Commons, embittered by the internal dissensions of the Tory party, brought Harley into prominence, which established his reputation as a man of urbanity, judgment, and political resource. His relations with the predominant Tory clique were, during this factious strife, cordial; and Godolphin only awaited an opportunity to enlist in his service qualities so admirable.

Never had a Speaker a more difficult office to perform than Harley. His political career was not without a certain Whiggish taint, which pleased the less extreme section of the Opposition, and it was to the corresponding wing of the Tory party that he was equally acceptable. This adroit opportunist, with friends in every camp, was the man for the Government. Marlborough approved of him, and Godolphin, when the hour came, selected him for the vacant Secretaryship of State.

The downfall of Nottingham was the climax to a series of changes in the administration which caused Anne acute distress, for the bitter-

ness which marked the war of factions in Parliament was reflected at Court. The irascible Rochester was the first of the High Tories to be expelled by the dominant clique. He imported into his grievances all the acrimony of a disappointed relative. To him it seemed unnatural that he was not the chief of his niece's Cabinet; and maddened by what he conceived to be her perversity, he rejoiced in the Nottingham cabal. His domineering temper was, however, in the long run, an effective check to his schemes. The death of Charlotte Bevervaart, one of the Queen's ladies of the bedchamber, hastened his downfall. The chance, he thought, was not to be missed of installing a trusty friend at Court—one who if she could not hope to checkmate Sarah, would at least furnish some antidote to her influence. Rochester asked that his eldest daughter, the charming young Lady Dalkeith, should be given the vacancy.

Surely the Queen would be delighted to have her cousin in her train! Rochester never doubted what her answer would be. The thing was so reasonable he would not even condescend to regard it as a favour. But for natural likes or dislikes what cared Sarah? Away with cousins, away with the Hydes, bag and baggage! She would have none of them about the Sovereign. And Rochester's request was refused.

But the incident did not end there. Rochester's enemies seized the occasion of this humiliation to press home the attack upon one who was foremost in thwarting their plans. For months he had been absent from Dublin. The Queen ordered him to return to his Viceregal banishment. This from the niece who ought to have made her mother's family princes and rulers! Rochester showed no alacrity in obeying the order. Again the Queen's commands were given him. But Rochester was dogged; he would not obey. Sooner than do so he would resign, and resign he did, and his office was entrusted to the Duke of Ormonde.

The strife of the factions for supremacy in the Queen's council was waged with enhanced bitterness when it became clear that the weaker were to have no quarter. Once again victory was to the cool head, the unruffled spirit, the placid temper. Nottingham attempted to end the contentions by taking a bold decision. He would make a personal appeal to the Queen. He believed himself to be the one man in the Government with whom she was in complete agreement. She knew his record and trusted him. A friend to the cause of liberty, he had none the less never been a traitor, not even when Anne herself had led the way. An escutcheon so stainless reassured the Queen, who owed the

Crown to one set of rebels and feared another set might deprive her of it. He had, however, other recommendations to her favour besides having neither bought nor sold in the days when honour was up for auction. He was neither a wit whom she could not understand, nor a rake to despise her as a prude. But, unhappily, he had the defects of his rectitude. He was inflexible, not only in his principles but in his manners. He was lofty, unyielding, and dogmatic, and, in his austere way, as overbearing as the choleric Rochester. The Earl, swarthy as a Spaniard, with something in his mien of the statesman-ecclesiastic of the Middle Ages, entered therefore one day the private cabinet of Anne to prefer a request which, if granted, would have made him master of the Government.

Speedily the secret was out. It was a proposal and a threat.

The Queen was aghast. What was this that the Earl demanded? For it was a demand. To dismiss her Whig ministers, every one, and rule with the help of the Tories! Her heart leaped to her mouth. Banish Somerset and Devonshire and . . . and . . . Marlborough and Sarah! Yes, she could see it in his eye. There would be no escape even for Sarah if this uncompromising Nottingham were made dictator. She liked him for his principles. She liked him still better for

his audacity. But, unhappily, she could not applaud his courage, and at the same time make him a present of all the risks. She was now in the highest place, and could not choose her course without incurring praise or blame. Why could they not all be her loyal servants? Somerset had been a good friend; Devonshire was a dangerous enemy. Marlborough! . . . She was tired of him. But she could not imagine England without Marlborough. He was a European personage, moving kings and princes hither and thither at will on the political chessboard. To attempt to overthrow him might cost her the Throne. And then there was Sarah! Tiresome, relentless Sarah, so successful yet so insatiable, so bitter.

The Queen thought it all over for a moment. Poor Queen!

Nottingham watched her with eager eyes debate the problem with herself. Then he tried to help her judgment to a final verdict. She was a Tory. The dread of being surrendered body and soul to the Whigs would overwhelm her. He dropped a hint that her advisers should be either of one party or the other. The coalition Ministry was a failure. It was more than a failure. It was a fraud, because while masquerading as Tory it was in reality wholly Whig.

The Queen was moved. But he asked too much. He asked what an Elizabeth would not

dare to grant, for not even an Elizabeth could drive these dukes and their friends from power. For her feebleness Nottingham had no pity. He was goaded to desperation and had at his command no reserve of gracious perseverance, of elegant wit with which to charm and convince the Queen. Instead, he was all that a courtier must never be. He was terribly in earnest, overbearing, unbending; he was resolute, and he looked it. If only he had not looked it! A jest at his own expense, at hers, at anybody's; a shaft of airy cynicism would have relieved the tension and disarmed her fears. But this determination was too heroic for matronly Anne. It hurt her pride. It frightened her. He was a good man; but even good men on occasion may be tyrants, the most ruthless tyrants. Galling as was Sarah's yoke, she would not lightly change it for the honest Earl's. When she spoke it was apparent he had wounded her vanity. But Don Dismalo was not the man to tack and trim. Bluntly he put his ultimatum—Whig or Tory, Tory or Whig; which would it be?

Then Anne, indignant at his tone, indignant at the attitude of the man who represented her opinions at the Council table, evinced that independence which at rare intervals in her life gave some hint of strength of character, unsuspected and undeveloped. She declined to be

taken at a disadvantage and submit to be browbeaten by an able man whom she liked into measures of which she was unable to foresee the consequences. She should have time to think. Nottingham had played his last trump card, and lost.

At his departure he left the Queen under the impression that the position admitted of no delay. She should come to a prompt decision. It was his supreme blunder. It obliged Her Majesty to seek council in so grave a difficulty, and to seek it at once ; and who should be her councillor but Godolphin ?

The venerable Treasurer was the antithesis of his brother Earl, the Secretary of State. Nottingham was tragic—he was for instant and dramatic action. Godolphin was cool to indifference—he was for pursuing a middle course, which would capture the sympathy of all moderate men. If change there should be, then let the fanatics go, and in open opposition rather than in secret caballing, wage war upon the Government.

To a woman longing above everything for tranquillity, Godolphin's advice was convincing, because it called for neither courage nor action. It thrust upon her no responsibility. Thus were the High Tories vanquished, and the Earl of Nottingham, the Duke of Buckinghamshire, the Earl of Jersey, Sir Edward Seymour, and Blathwayte, Secretary of War, disappeared from

the Ministry. Robert Harley was given the vacant Secretaryship of State; the brilliant, the profligate, the unscrupulous St. John was made Secretary of War; the Marquis of Kent, Lord Chamberlain; and Sir Thomas Mansell, Comptroller of the Household. The loss of Nottingham as one of her advisers grieved Anne deeply. She was as ardent as he for the ascendency of the Church. Now that he was gone who would be its defender? Not Godolphin; not Marlborough.

This tenderness of Anne's for the Church is not a little amusing. Her career up to this point is not that of one overburdened with religion. When her brother was born her welcome to him was of earth rather than of Heaven. There was nothing of the blessed in her letters to Mary of Orange. At the downfall of her father her side was not that of the angels. From girlhood she had loved horses and cards and a bountiful table. But now to these idols of irresponsible youth was joined that of the Church, with a leaning to Rome rather than to Geneva.

By the Stuarts the Church was ever valued as the best bulwark of the Throne. Anne could not be unconscious of its political importance. But one must not deny to her at this epoch some spark of spirituality. No woman could pass through what she had endured, the troubles she had courted, the troubles that had been forced

upon her, and remain a trifler, a card-player, an egotist, and nothing more. Sorrow had for long nestled by her hearth. Death had made its habitation with her. Remorse was the companion of her loneliness. With such preceptors who would not be awakened to some faint sense of the mystery of life and the tyranny of death, the poverty of time, and the awful wealth of eternity? It was a scroll of revelation which did not make Queen Anne a mystic. The atmosphere of the Court was too stormy for mysticism. Nor was Anne of the stuff of which Saint Teresas are made. Instead, she found solace in the part of generous patroness of the Church.

It was therefore with something like dismay that Anne saw Harley, a descendant of one of the most ferocious of the iconoclasts of her grandfather's time, introduced into the Ministry to fill the shoes of the devout Nottingham. It afforded her no consolation that the Duke of Marlborough was gratified at Harley's promotion. Motives of policy obliged her to hear with respect the opinions of the Duke as dinned into her ears by Sarah. But the Marlboroughs and their policy were now equally distasteful to her, and her earnest prayers were for the speedy downfall of both. Heaven was not deaf. Harley was the answer to these prayers, though she did not know it, for he it was who was to be the instrument of retribution.

CHAPTER XXIX

"IT is a prisoner!"

From lip to lip it ran till the troops were all grinning, officers and men, as only a French army can, in the teeth of misfortune.

It was a capital jest, not to be lightly relished and forgotten, in an evil hour when jests were rare. And so they turned it over, to extract from it the finest essence of mockery:

"We have taken an Englishman!. . ."

"An officer!. . ."

"The deuce, he is a general!. . ."

"It is the crown of the campaign!. . ."

"They will die of delight in Paris!. . ."

"And of Te Deums!. . ."

Unconscious of the persiflage which heralded their approach, Lord Orkney and a French officer advanced along the road to Blenheim.

Lord Orkney, husband of Elizabeth Villiers, was "The Prisoner." He had come from Marlborough with his companion to invite twelve thousand men, entrapped in the little Bavarian town on the banks of the Danube, to surrender.

The alternative to surrender was wholesale carnage. The position held by the French and their Bavarian allies at the beginning of that disastrous day had rested upon the important Danubian town of Hochstadt and the adjacent agricultural settlement of Blenheim. The English, Dutch, and Germans under Marlborough and Prince Eugene had broken their lines, and amidst the rout, the thousands who had not been drowned or slain or captured sought refuge where the homesteads of Blenheim were huddled together off the main road. Their infantry and cavalry crowded upon one another like frightened sheep, while the victorious confederates surrounded them. Defence was impossible where there was no room for free movement. Attack was impossible, for they had no outworks behind which to form into battle array. Above all, they had no leader. The Marquis de Clairnbault was missing, his soldiering ended in the Danube. There remained nobody to restore discipline, to inflame the ardour of the French, the patriotism of the Bavarians—nobody to thrill them with the cry of volunteers for a forlorn hope.

It was an unlucky day for France, this thirteenth of August, 1704. The sooner it was ended the better. And so twelve thousand men laid down their arms. The star of Versailles had set. Louis XIV. was no longer invincible.

Marlborough heard with relief of the success of Orkney's mission. Twelve thousand highly disciplined troops posted in the heart of a friendly country might by a feat of desperate valour have snatched victory from his grasp. Thank Heaven that danger was past! He had won a great battle; he had now the right to put away anxiety for a little time.

To Sarah his thoughts turned now that they were free. Sarah would be pleased. That was very nearly everything to this mighty captain. Taking a tavern bill, he scrawled on the back of it a few lines telling her what Blenheim henceforth meant. An aide-de-camp was in waiting to carry despatches to England. The tavern bill was the only dispatch. But to the bearer he entrusted his loving duty and obedience to the Queen. One who had helped to ride down Tallard's legions could tell Her Majesty more than he could write.

The officer flung himself into the saddle, struck spurs to his horse, and was away to the west.

Ride, courier, ride from the red field. Ride for all your steed is worth over the plains, over hill and dale, by river and gorge, to where, beyond, lies the coast, and the blue sea stretches away until its farther edge dances on the English shore.

With purse well lined with guineas, this courier does not spare his horse, though he loves the

beast as a gallant soldier should. But this is no time for love ; for himself he cares as little as for his horse : England awaits his coming. On, then, and on out of Bavaria, through Baden and the Flemish land, past the farms of the Dutch, changing horses here, tarrying there for bite and sup, liberal with his gold for service great and small, as behoves an officer of the English Queen.

The North Sea at last. Oh ! for a wind fresh and fair to speed his barque to the mother-land. Welcome was the captain to his price so that swift and sure he carried the traveller to where, on cliffs of white and green, many a watch-man yearned for the tidings he bore. Kind were wind and waves to this warrior of the sailor-race. Through the cold mists of the dawn he saw the headlands of East Anglia boldly breasting the deep, and desolate strands stretching inshore to where the woodlands were piled dark and massive in the bosom of the blue horizon.

England, what news is this ? . . . The herald has but landed. He has but dropped a hint of the glorious tidings, yet, as it were, the heather is on fire. The electric thrill courses through the land. The hoofs of the courier's horse can be heard only faintly now as along the road to London he gallops. Fast and furious let him gallop, but never will he overtake the message which fluttered from the sails of his ship to the

eager ears along the shore, and from lip to lip passed to the four quarters of the kingdom. But every minute is an hour until he reaches the feet of Queen Anne, and if the birds carried his secret ahead of him the gallant soldier did not know it, and so he spurred for life and death, that not by an instant might Her Majesty be cheated of her rejoicing.

Heavy were the roads, and at every plunge the charger sank over his fetlocks. Lucky was the rider if more serious grief did not befall him than the floundering of his steed in ruts, broad and deep, that made this gallop along the high road more perilous than a dash upon the French lines. But if horse and rider rolled over in the race, quickly were they up and away to London, where already the town hummed with the joy of anticipation that was soon to be the delirium of knowledge.

But the Queen was not there. On to Windsor.

In her boudoir at the Castle was Anne when they told her that an officer was without, come from Marlborough, to tell of a great victory by the banks of the Danube; and the courier, who had already delivered to Sarah her lord's brief scrawl, was ushered into the presence of the Queen.

The gentleman who was privileged to tell

Anne and the knot of ladies and courtiers who were her companions the story of the first great battle won on the Continent for centuries by the arms of England, was Colonel Parke, aide-de-camp to the Duke of Marlborough.

The Queen's eyes kindled as Parke unfolded his glorious tale. It all meant the exaltation of the Marlboroughs, for England, well she knew, would go mad with delight over this victory. But in that moment, when the soldier fresh from the field kissed her hand, she too was above all an Englishwoman, and proudly beat her heart that the banners of her country had been carried to such another triumph as had not been seen since Agincourt.

If the Queen's eyes lighted with enthusiasm, those of Sarah blazed. This day must one forgive her, for the pride and joy that filled her veins with liquid fire were born of emotions to do honour to the gentlest dame that ever heard a message of gladness from the wars. To-day Sarah could forgive the Queen for being the Queen ; she could forgive the Court that it did not fall down and adore her. She could forgive Rochester and the others who had thwarted her and her splendid Duke, for now were they crushed. She could forgive them all, because for this day Marlborough was the King of English hearts, and she their queen.

What was Parke saying? Sarah stood by the Queen, but her mind was far away.

She heard the aide-de-camp as in a dream. His voice reached her in broken sentences as when a child closes and uncloses his ears. He spoke of French, of English, of Dutch, of Bavarians, of Imperialists; of the reconnaissance, the advance, the feint, the retreat; of cavalry plunging headlong to the charge; of artillery silenced and captured by the allies as they thundered forward to the grand assault.

Hochstadt. . . . Blenheim. . . . The shattered lines. . . . The Danube black with the dead. . . . The village choked with battalions. . . . How Eugene's life was saved by a miracle. . . . How when the trumpets sounded the general charge, the sword of swords leaped from its scabbard, and to the front to lead them on galloped Marlborough. . . . Ah! that was the name that had in it magic! Glorious Marlborough! Intoxicating Marlborough! That name recalled Sarah to the presence of Parke, of the Queen. But only for a moment, then was she back again, fighting once more in spirit the battles that had made her and her husband the central figures in Europe that day, envied from the Danube to the Thames, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean—envied not only of subjects, but of princes and kings, the envy of the Emperor

himself, whose capital had been saved by this Englishman from the French and the Bavarians.

The Queen was told all that she wanted to know, or at least all that she dared to ask. How were the brave officers, the brave soldiers? What of the wounded, of the dying . . . what of the dead? For in that hour, when martial spirits were aflame, the Queen was swift to think of that sadder phase of life, of which Fate had made her one of the initiates. Her mind turned to the mourners. Her lot was with them, with the homes made void, the lovers divorced, the mothers made lonely, rather than with those others on whom, in their elation, no shadow fell. It was ordered by the Queen that Parke should have five hundred pieces of gold, but the chivalrous Colonel begged that he might go without the gold and have, instead, Her Majesty's portrait.

From the Court, sad despite these glorious tidings, sad because of things which no human hand could cure, one turns with all the world to that land over the seas whence the courier had come—to the hero of Blenheim. The legions who rode with the conqueror himself, what knew they of the secrets, the tempests of the heart, that were with him from camp to camp, multiplying the anxieties of diplomacy and darkening victory?

The abandonment of his youth Marlborough

had long ago left behind, concentrating the whole strength of his nature on the accumulation of wealth and power and fame. The old-time lover of the Duchess of Cleveland wasted his energies on no vagrant amours when, as General of the Empire, fortune gave him the opportunity he had so coveted, of proving himself one of the greatest generals and diplomatists the world had ever seen. But fortune never works whole-heartedly—never is opportunity thrust upon the favourite of the gods without some alloy. And Marlborough was no exception. To weld together a confederacy including England, Austria, Prussia, Hanover, Minor German States, and Holland, was a feat for a Machiavelli. But Marlborough had not only to accomplish the political federation, but on him likewise devolved the task of making their armies march. To disarm the jealousies of the second-rate and third-rate German princes, to soften the rivalries of generals, each one of whom thought himself a Cæsar, was portion of the daily routine of Marlborough's life on the Continent. Easy and simple it all was to the great man born for great achievements. The jealous princes were to him so many children. He gave them the things that pleased them, and smiled to himself at the vanity which it amused him to humour when he could not afford to despise it.

The torment was not there. No prince or general of the whole array of the Empire had power to vex his soul. That supremacy was reserved for the one he loved. The indomitable Sarah, the terrible Sarah, was terrible, too, to Jack! The engaging manners which had made young Churchill so agreeable to the Duke of York, and later to King James, had not been spoiled by success. The hard knocks of the battlefield had developed in him no rough edges. The polished, insinuating courtier was now a middle-aged man, but still a courtier to his finger-tips—a trifle more sedate than of old, but more polished, more insinuating, more subtle, more intrepid, for all this gentleness, than ever.

Between him and Sarah was there ever such a contrast! The pert maid-of-honour to Mary Beatrice had grown into a shrew, a virago, afraid of nothing, in love with nothing, a mad woman when crossed, so disastrously had the natural tyranny of her disposition been pampered by the compliance of those who had learned to dread her tongue. In her wrath she spared nobody, least of all the one on whose temper hung the destinies of Europe. Marlborough needed, above all, serenity for his mission. The apt word, the gentle acquiescence, the chivalrous compliment —trifles such as these kept his allies in good humour, and obtained for him the help of

regiments and brigades, the support of ministers and princes.

But it was often a heart sore and weary, because of Sarah's ungovernable spirit, that Marlborough brought to problems the most engrossing, the most disquieting, the most formidable. One sees him restraining himself in face of all sorts of difficulties and perplexities; his wife never. Often in the loneliness of the camp must bitter thoughts have assailed him, that this woman whom he loved so dearly should so enhance his anxieties. Never from one day to another could he be sure what surprise would be sprung upon him—not by his enemies, for them he was prepared, but by his wife. Yet withal he loved her, and if the bitter thoughts came, they were promptly repelled, and no reproach of her survives in all his letters.

When he was leaving England in 1704 for the campaign which culminated in the victory of Blenheim, a struggle to which no imagination can do justice was before him. It was a time, above all, for solace, for encouragement. Those who loved him should have cheered him with pictures of a devoted home to which, in spirit, he could always turn for rest from the toils, the uncertainties, the apprehensions of the field. But alas for the hopes built upon the tenderest of all ties! It was in anger that he and Sarah

parted. The anger was all on her side; but for Marlborough the distress was not the less great, the strain upon his energies not the less grievous, at a time when he had to reconcile to his ideas the most conflicting elements in the confederacy —reconcile or conquer them by finesse.

The record of Marlborough's march across Europe, almost by stealth, lest his own allies should thwart him, is one of the most familiar pages of history. But that which makes the achievement human, thrilling, tender; that which imparts to it the light and the shade of everyday emotions, elevated to the sublime by the personality of the victim and the grandeur of the stage, is the sinking heart of the mighty general, marching onwards to battle with his soul distraught by a shrewish woman, and caring little if death relieved him from a burden which only her love and kindness could transmute to a delight.

To win a battle was a simple matter compared with the persevering drudgery necessary to lead his men through an inhospitable land to the banks of the Danube. It was a struggle which oppressed the stoutest heart amongst his battalions. But happily, in the midst of all his distress, there came to Marlborough a message which cheered him more than news of a reinforcement of ten thousand men. It was

a letter from Sarah "making it up." The great Duke was made as happy as a City apprentice at this favour from his lady-love—how happy we may judge from his reply to her, in which he hints that her harshness had made him weary of life, and wishful for the end of all his petty vexations.

In that ecstasy of passion which only such tempestuous natures as Sarah's can inspire, he wrote as tender a love-letter as middle-aged lover ever penned:

"If you will give me leave, it will be a great pleasure to me to have it in my power to read this dear, dear letter often, and that it may be found in my strong-box when I am dead.

"I do this minute love you better than ever I did in my life before. This letter of yours has made me so happy, that I do from my soul wish we could retire and not be blamed.

"What you propose as to coming over I should be extremely pleased with; for your letter has so transported me that I think you would be happier in being here than where you are, although I should not be able to see you often. But, you see, it would be impossible for you to follow me. You have by this kindness preserved my quiet, and, I believe, my life; for till I had this letter I had been very indifferent of what should become of myself."

Thus, for the crumbs of affection thrown to him at odd intervals by his consort, did he

prostrate himself in gratitude. Not for a moment did Sarah seriously contemplate leaving the Court for the battlefield. Not for a moment did the Duke dream of permitting her to do so. But as younger lovers will, she more than half-offered to do what she was happy to find he more than half-refused. Thus at the game of make-believe, which heals so many tiffs of sweethearts, did the great general and his lady play.

In September the Queen went to St. Paul's in State, accompanied by all the great officers of her household, through streets lined with troops, there to make thanksgiving for the victory. In the State-coach rode with her Prince George, the Duchess of Marlborough and Lady Fretchville being seated opposite the Royal pair. From that solemn Te Deum the Duke was absent, for it was December before he reached England. Then honours were showered upon him thick and fast. The Queen, the Lords, the Commons, the City, Society, the populace, were all eager to do him homage. Greedy of possession, even Marlborough and his wife could not but feel that England was generous in making over to them for ever the manor of Woodstock, rich in Plantagenet and Tudor associations, and worthy to be the appanage of a Royal prince.

The cup of their content was full, or, at least, as full as it could ever be, for the Duke of England, the Prince of the Empire, the greatest captain in Europe, was poorer in the richest of treasures than many a humble lieutenant of his army. To the shores of his country no son greeted him. The handsome, spirited boy he had seen grow to the threshold of manhood, the boy on whom he had built so many hopes, the centre of all his dreams and ambitions, the boy who atoned for all his crosses at home, all his perplexities abroad, was no more. John, Lord Blandford, like William of Gloucester, was gone to the shadow-land, and Queen and favourites were, amidst the glories of the purple and the glories of renown, peers at least in misfortune.

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by John Closterman, in the National Portrait Gallery.

JOHN CHURCHILL, DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH, K.G.

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CHAPTER XXX

AT the sight of a man Lady Wishfort's little girl shrieked. The fearsome creature was a devourer of small people. She reached her tenth birthday, her eleventh, and her twelfth; still that reassuring shriek. But early in her teens the note of terror rang less true. Curiosity was killing alarm. With the help of his long robes the chaplain had posed to her as a woman. One day she awoke to the fraud upon the real petticoat. His reverence was a straggler from the strange camp, and the whole angelic structure of a world made up of little girls and big ones, women and dolls, toppled into ruin. . . . And then they married her to Fainall. In Mrs. Fainall's circle they had no illusions, not even about their husbands, and they were never heard to shriek, save in temper.

Congreve was the creator of the Wishforts and the Fainalls; and who should know the whole tribe better—himself a coxcomb by trade, a playwright by recreation? If the little maid of Anne's day was to escape without a dent in the

armour of her innocence, small traffic should she have with her father's or brother's friends. Pleasant devils they were, but devils none the less, sparkling in their sins, and fit to delude the wisest of virgins. The Restoration had abolished morals. In the century that opened with the reign of Anne the embargo of scorn still rested upon honest love and duty ; and the Stage and Literature enforced the levy to the uttermost farthing.

In one of his dedications addressed to the Queen, Congreve assured Her Majesty that the example of princes made virtue a fashion in the people. The playwright himself, despite this fine sentiment, did nothing either to foster the example or promote the fashion he applauded so loyally. It was a writer of parts less brilliant, but of wit infinitely more delicate, of taste ages ahead of Congreve in refinement, who was to show how laughter might be evoked from the foibles of human nature, without penning a line to offend the most fastidious critic, or the most sensitive maid that ever shrieked at sight of man. The battle which made the name of Marlborough as the first of captains also saw the rise of the star of Addison ; and if literature owes nothing to either Anne or the great soldier-duke, it owes to Blenheim more than it can repay.

With Thackeray as guide we hark back to the London of the Augustans, to meet in a shabby

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller in the National Portrait Gallery.

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

apartment in the Haymarket Joe Addison and Dick Steele. There, too, is the novelist's hero, Harry Esmond, home from reaping glory at Blenheim. Addison was the host, and the apartment proclaimed the sorry state of his purse.

". . . A frugal dinner, consisting of a slice of meat and a penny loaf, was awaiting the owner of the lodgings. 'My wine is better than my meat,' says Mr. Addison. 'My Lord Halifax sent me the Burgundy.' And he set a bottle before his friends, and ate his simple dinner in a very few minutes; after which the three fell-to and began to drink. 'You see,' says Mr. Addison, pointing to his writing-table, whereon was a map of the action at Hochstadt, and several other gazettes and pamphlets relating to the battle, 'that I too am busy about your affairs, captain. I am engaged as political gazetteer, to say truth, and am writing a poem on the campaign.' And then Esmond, at the request of his host, launched into a description of Blenheim, employing the while 'bits of tobacco pipe' to illustrate for his friends the course of the fight."

The Lord Halifax referred to by Thackeray was not that philosophic brother-in-law of Robert, Earl of Sunderland, who had repaid with interest the injuries done him by James II. He had passed away, leaving no heir to his titles; but a barony of Halifax was soon revived in favour

of Charles Montague, one of the famous Whig junto of the reign of Anne. This Halifax it was who brought Addison to the notice of Godolphin. The Lord Treasurer, who knew little enough of poetry, lamented that the nation was being made ridiculous by the laureates, who daily sang of Blenheim. No lyre was so tuneless as to withhold its music, no bard so modest as to remain dumb. Halifax, who knew every man of genius in London, including the shabby-genteel lodger in the Haymarket, complained to Godolphin that while blockheads were called to stations of honour, great men were starving in their garrets.

That there was a poet in the land worthy to sing the praises of Marlborough was a happy surprise for Godolphin, who trembled at the thought of what Sarah would say were the Duke's feat of arms reduced by the flood of bathos to a theme of universal ridicule. He protested, therefore, that if a poem of merit celebrated the victory of Blenheim the poet need have no misgivings as to his reward. Then Halifax remembered his young friend. Here was Joe Addison's chance. Blenheim had not been fought in vain.

Next morning Harry Boyle, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, climbed up those rickety stairs in the Haymarket to give impecunious genius the commission which made its fortune.

Addison was handicapped indeed by no dearth of first-hand information concerning the wars while Dick Steele was his boon companion. The fascination of the volatile Dick for the staid scholar is in its way one of the curiosities of literature. Dick was a rake with pious aspirations, a humorist with a keen eye for the deft touch which converts the most serious things of life into a jest. Through all Addison's humour there runs an undercurrent of sadness, distant, gentle, alluring. In Steele's most touching periods there is some faint echo of mirth. The Court circle and the society of the men of intellect and pleasure who patronised the famous coffee-houses were open to Steele, who, proud of the learning and amused by the modesty of his friend, became his preceptor in the ways of the town.

Addison's poem on Blenheim was finished by December 1704, and henceforth he was assured, not only of the patronage of the Government, but of the friendship of her who was in a sense more powerful than the Government, Sarah herself. This Joseph who did homage to the fiery Duchess is, however, an unfamiliar personage. That keen eye of his for humorous contrasts must have acknowledged, by many a surreptitious twinkle, the irony, the drollery of a situation in which the critic of morals and manners found himself the *protégé* of a lightly-varnished bar-

barian. He dedicated to Her Grace this musical drama, "Rosamond."

It was evidence that Joseph could be practical as well as poetical. The dedication inflicted no injury on literature, and was good for the poet, as events quickly proved, for through Sarah's influence Queen Anne made him Keeper of the Records in the Birmingham Tower at a salary of four hundred a year, though all the records there were not, they say, worth half-a-crown.

The chance which obtained for Addison admission to Court and a sinecure is an ideal instance of what the literary man of the period esteemed the best of fortune. The favour of the great was indispensable to a poor writer, who should without it forsake his pen for some more prosaic avocation, unless, indeed, he was ready to consecrate his heart's blood to Grub Street at starvation rates.

Happily the Augustans did not want for patrons, and of these Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset, himself one of the most gifted of the minor poets of an earlier day, was doyen for a little time. The gay spark, now grown old, the devil-may-care gallant who had carried Anne off from the Cockpit in the midst of a November rain-storm, the friend and benefactor of Dryden, was, however, thought by one of the rising intellects of this period rather a "dull fellow."

It was Swift who thus spoke of him, and incompatible, perhaps, at any time of his life, would the great satirist have found one who lived as entirely for pleasure as he did for ambition.

"To all you Ladies now on Land," written while at sea during the first war with the Dutch, enshrined Dorset's philosophy of life in a witty and spirited lyric. Swift, too, was always harping on the ladies, but in what a different key! The noble dandy gloried in a lovely face, a trim figure, the curves of a dainty hand, or a nimble foot. He was a poet and an epicurean, while Swift was the most ruthless of logicians. No wonder he found Dorset, whose youth was devoted to fighting, poetry, pleasure, and love, a "dull fellow." For in all these things he was the converse of the satirist; the reckless converse of one, who, while immortalising Varina, Stella, and Vanessa, established himself as a monument of icy discretion in affairs of the heart.

When Swift came to London in the spring following Addison's success with "The Campaign," the author of a "Tale of a Tub" had already made his name. He was constantly in the society of Addison, and when the two were together they never, we are told, wished for a third person. But in the London of Queen

Anne solitude was not easily attained by a man of acknowledged genius. Did he desert but for a day his accustomed coffee-house, friends came a-knocking at his door to know the reason why.

The coffee-houses were centres of free-and-easy intercourse, banned in the salons of the great families. Every lady of fashion had her "day" when members of her coterie crowded to her drawing-room to see and to be seen. But these receptions did not encourage the easy familiarity in which choice spirits gave of their best. The art of associating wit with fashion had perished at the death of Charles II. There was no longer, as we know, a Whitehall in which all that was gay and charming, diverting and brilliant, might mingle round the Sovereign.

After the fire of 1692 there had been talk of rebuilding the famous palace, whose every court and alley, gallery and hall, was pervaded with the quintessence of romance, distilled during centuries. But the project came to nothing. Hence it was that at her accession we found Anne receiving the Council at St. James's. The Court she maintained there, though the resort of many a wit, though one might meet in the throng of notables Swift and Congreve, Addison and Prior, Newton and Kneller, St. John and Walpole, Parnell and Garth, and Arbuthnot; though Dick Steele might be heard

laughing and chattering with the gentlemen-ushers of the adventures that befell him on yesternight at the Devil Tavern at Charing Cross, or with delicious gravity preaching the virtues of sobriety, of which for a full month he had been a pattern, yet the soul of the place lacked fire and vivacity. The Augustans went to Court, but there was nobody to emit the spark which would have started the conflagration of wit, of repartee, of eloquence.

The vices which, according to Chesterfield, would be most readily forgiven a Court were absent, and virtue did not carry herself with sparkling and ingenuous abandonment. The Queen spoke two or three words every two or three minutes to the persons nearest her, as Swift complains, and the wits oppressed retired to the Cocoa Tree with Halifax or Somers, or to White's with Jersey or Buckinghamshire, for men of all parties were proud to meet on equal terms men of genius. At Button's, in Covent Garden, Addison liked to sit and listen and study human nature, as he tells us in *The Spectator*. But not at Button's did he choose his favourite characters.

The portrait of Sir Roger de Coverley was, it is said, drawn after a Tory squire of Worcestershire, Sir John Parkington, who sat in the Commons, whilst an officer of the Lifeguards

inspired the idea of Will Honeycomb. Further east was the Grecian in Devereux Court, the resort of lawyers, scientific men, and, above all, of Sir Isaac Newton, Master of the Queen's Mint.

Child's, in St. Paul's Churchyard, was the rendezvous of doctors and clergymen. There would be found Radcliffe, the object of Anne's undying aversion, for had he not deserted Windsor when poor little Gloucester was fighting his last fight? But by-and-by he was to appear by the bedside at Kensington, whence Anne was to escape from the Crown which sat so heavily on her aching brows. And with Radcliffe would be his friend Kneller, whose brush makes celebrities of his time still live on canvas. The bickerings of servants once ruffled that friendship of physician and artist, to foster which a door had been built communicating between the gardens of their houses at Kensington. The doctor's maids stole the painter's flowers.

"I shall take the door away and brick the aperture up," said Kneller.

"Take it and do what you like with it except paint it," was Radcliffe's reply.

"I am willing to take anything from you except physic," was Kneller's parting shot.

To be famous it was not as yet necessary to be venerable. Congreve was a young man of

thirty, but his work was done. Macaulay depicts him as a species of living classic, looked up to by poets and playwrights, and enjoying in early life all the laurels which posterity usually deposits on a great man's grave. By withdrawing from the arena he had not ceased to be a comrade, but he was no longer a rival to be emulated and dethroned. The highest pinnacle of literary fame had never before been gained so easily, and in the prime of early manhood Congreve was content, as he said to Voltaire, to be a simple gentleman, an affectation which elicited from the distinguished pilgrim to Surrey Street, in the Strand, the withering retort: "Had you been merely a gentleman I had not come to see you!"

Eloquent and melancholy is Swift's description of himself as three years older than Congreve, though Congreve was in reality twenty years older than he. Congreve, drunk with fame, giddy with vain glory, sated with flattery, petted by society, welcome in the homes of the great, a prince amongst the wits, a prime beau amongst the dandies—Congreve, who vaulted from boyhood to fame! Here, indeed, was the darling of the gods. And then Swift, soured by poverty, by repression, by oppression; Swift for whom life would only begin when he had secured his bishopric; Swift, the sport of fortune,

the victim of his patrons, the victim of self! For him the appreciation of his friends and the promises of ministers were vain and empty, without rank. He was a noble without a coronet, in poverty and exile; and serene enjoyment for him there could be none until they acknowledged his aristocracy and uplifted him above his fellows. Then would he be the real Swift, then would he revel in the roses and linger on the honey, and trip a measure to the music of life. But first he should emerge. His ambition should be crowned. And the crown never touched his brow. The life of this man, so ambitious, so richly endowed, so bitterly disappointed, has a charm to which the best efforts of his pen never attain. The man was greater than his works; for his spirit was so oppressed by lack of recognition, so tortured by hope turned to gall, that the best within him was never realised by himself. Those who spoke with him delighted in him; but what is left which explains of itself that magnetic power which captured the gentle and fastidious Addison? Genius in him was so luxuriantly gifted as to be its own ruin.

But he did not suffer alone, and the hapless women who shared his ruin share likewise his immortality. These victims on the altar of despotic genius worshipped him, despite his

contempt for niceties of breeding. What had a lord of intellect to do with polished commonplaces! Cheerfully they submitted to a fascination of which he was at first unconscious and to which he ever remained indifferent, a fascination that would have died at the least effort to cultivate it. His relations with Stella are amongst the eternal puzzles of literature; but in the romance of Vanessa and Swift there is little of doubt or mystery. She died of a broken heart, and there is no room to wonder why. For the woman who loved Swift no other love was possible. Under heaven there was nothing like him! And to lose him was to lose the world. Of that reverence for womanhood as a poetic cult which has given to the western world its most entrancing stories, Swift had none. See him in the Earl of Burlington's drawing-room, commanding the hostess like an emperor:

"Lady Burlington, I hear you can sing: sing me a song." This unceremonious command to the lady of the house had its ridiculous aspect. But either the lady had not the key to its humour, or Swift had not the grace to see that there are moments when one must not be droll.

The Countess refused, her pride deeply hurt. Swift would not be rebuffed. He was on his mettle. His humour, which at first only wanted

tact, now deliberately took on a rough edge. He stood on his privilege as a wit, and so cruelly pestered his poor hostess that she retired in tears. If this was his tone to a great lady, one can fancy the empire he assumed over Stella, whom he knew from childhood, and who would as soon dream of ending her life as of disobeying him. Vanessa was older when she fell under the spell of the tyrant, but, alas ! not old enough. Esther Vanhomrigh was the daughter of a Dutch merchant, and about nineteen when she first met Swift in London. The girl was soon one of the great man's Court—for a king he was in his own province, dictating the terms upon which his society might be enjoyed.

To-day no trace remains of the scene in which Vanessa betrayed to him the secret of her heart. The bonds of restraint snapped one day, and the truth was out. She loved him. To Stella, living with her chaperon in Ireland, a letter was sent daily from London by Swift ; but rarely did he mention to her the name of Esther Vanhomrigh. And so things drifted on to the climax of the tragedy.

At length Vanessa's mother died. There was then nothing left to live for but her idol, the genius whose eccentricity, whose wit, whose works, were on all men's lips, and she ventured to follow him to Ireland with her sister.

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by Charles Jervas in the National Portrait Gallery.

JONATHAN SWIFT, D.D.

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Poor Vanessa, ignorant of the wayward heart that goes with genius! To pursue Swift was to lose him. To him the ideal, the treasure beyond price, was the unattainable, whether it was a bishop's mitre or a woman's heart. He tried to prevail upon her to leave Ireland, but, instead, she settled near him. Then one day a letter arrived at the deanery. It asked a question—Was Swift really married to Stella? It was the writer's death-warrant. Swift took it and rode away with rage in his heart; and when he came to Celbridge, where lived the forlorn Dutch damsel, he stalked into her presence, flung down the letter and looked at her; then, turning on his heel, left without a word. That look stabbed her to the heart a thousand times; it killed her. And when in autumn the leaves were rustling to the earth, he heard that she was dead.

The seeds of madness were already in his blood. Poor antidote to the poison were the images that haunted him after this murder by a look. He went on crushing his enemies with his ruthless irony, his destructive humour, winning everywhere applause, but nowhere love—unless the humble, unquestioning adoration of Stella for this strange being, neither lover, husband, nor friend, who never saw her alone, could be called by the name of love. One must not follow the giant to the cruel darkness which by-and-by

engulfed him. In the misery and triumph of his strength, one leaves him sadly—this great, this little man, this arch-egotist, so clear of vision, yet so blind to the beautiful ; this proud Titan, revelling in the prodigality of his talents, who by one filmy thread of poetry, one gossamer bond of real love, might have been preserved from destruction.

The rival of Swift as a satirist, and of Addison as a writer of graceful prose, was Daniel Defoe. Taine has said that Addison polished the soul out of his essays. The rhythm is perfect, the writer's every idea crystallises before the mind's eye, so closely do the words fit the inspiration. But in the long run perfection grows monotonous, the harmony wearies. Refinement has passed the limits of art, and in delighting the ear misses the heart. Sir Roger de Coverley is more than an English squire, also, perhaps, a little less. His brother justices knew that he wore an aureole, could they but see it. His portrait would adorn the stained glass above his own tomb. But Defoe had the art of creating flesh and blood, and of breathing into it the unsymmetrical soul of everyday humanity.

The great Earl of Chatham, having read Defoe's story of the experiences of a cavalier, thought it by far the best history of the Civil War he had read. When he heard it was fiction it seemed

to him almost incredible that it could have been penned by one who, only in imagination, had followed the fortunes of the combatants. "Robinson Crusoe" might have been written yesterday, so free is it from the prolixity and insincerity of the eighteenth century. Crusoe was the apotheosis of Defoe's genius. Its sequel was a failure, and in his wilder literary debauches, like "Moll Flanders" and "Colonel Jaques," he touched a level to which such an intellectual aristocrat as Addison was incapable of descending.

The imperious demands of bread and butter obliged Defoe to give the best of his life to journalism. He was the lieutenant of Harley, and none amongst the journalists and pamphleteers of the period did better service to his paymasters. Into the slow, the cautious Harley, ready wit and sound judgment were infused by Defoe. Harley had a policy, Defoe was the great journalist who made it possible by means of a pen which essayed for the first time to sway the country through the intelligence of the middle classes. His was the instinct, almost prophetic in its accuracy, which kept Harley and Godolphin posted in the waves of feeling which swept over the country; and his was the fertile imagination which enabled the trimmers to profit by the ebb and flood of the popular tide. Unfortunately for Defoe, it was an age in which

the reward of political sagacity was the crumbs that fell from the table of proud mediocrity, whilst the satire which would have delighted a more cultured public was in his case rewarded with the pillory.

The raillery with which he first perplexed and then maddened the High Tories when Nottingham was making frantic efforts to ostracise the Dissenters, in fact as well as in law, brought upon him this humiliation. Whether from admiration for his genius or from motives of benevolence, Queen Anne's sympathy was with the culprit, and, with her usual generosity, she paid the fine which restored him to his family. In his relations with ministers there was no poetry. He worked hard and in return expected to be paid, and nothing more. Others might enjoy social triumphs, a golden one sufficed for him. When he sent in his bill it was the business man dealing with customers whom he neither esteemed nor despised, just as when he made bricks for the London builders at Tilbury, and bricks, indeed, he still made, of their kind second to none put upon the town.

Adieu to the company of the great men who were the glory of the London of Queen Anne! Not all their contemporaries were pleased to abide with their masterpieces. Fare more trivial did not want for patrons. The

theatres often produced plays at which no woman who valued her reputation would be seen. But ladies did not remain away. They compounded with their consciences by wearing masks. By sleeping until noon a woman of fashion in town could make the rest of the day pass pleasantly enough. But in the country she had often to pity herself. The men had their guns, their horses, their land to farm, their duties as landlords and justices to occupy them. But wives and sisters who were not wedded to the linen chest and their embroidery were in despair, when weather-bound they turned to the book-shelves. There was Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans. There were sermons and meditations. There were ponderous histories, travellers' tales, and interminable romances translated from the French and Italian. The comedies of the Restoration were under lock and key, and if the king of the castle were prudent the key was in his pocket. Well might the fair ones swear at the dreary prospect of the library. Into the lives of these leisurely dames came Mrs. Manley, playwright and romancer, as a boudoir-entertainer.

Mrs. Manley had many qualifications for writing of amorous intrigue, and, taking as her model the French chroniclers of Court scandal, she threw society into a fever with her imitations.

Had she peopled her books with purely fictitious creations her style would nevertheless have commanded a large audience at a time when there was no French novel to beat her with ease on her own ground. But by introducing well-known personages into her pages she immediately captured the public ear. Everybody was eager to see how their enemies had fared at her hands, and still more so perhaps were they curious as to the fate of their friends.

To the lady in town Manley was better than a comedy. To her sister in the country she was a benefactress. Into the gloomy grange she introduced a new, if not an admirable element of excitement. Lady Mary Pierrepoint, as yet but a young girl, in a letter from her father's country seat to a friend, laments in her witty and graceful way the delay in receiving Manley's latest composition. The post arrived regularly, for in Queen Anne's day the postal service was by no means despicable, but never a book, and Lady Mary gaily wished the defaulting sender might be hanged.

The Marlborough clique suffered grievously at the hands of Mrs. Manley. In "Sarah and the Zarazians" was traced the career of an imaginary Court favourite, beginning with her marriage to a rising soldier favoured by a mistress of the King. The likeness was unmistakable, and the

From an engraving by Caroline Watson, from a miniature.

LADY MARY PIERREPOINT (1710), AFTERWARDS LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGUE.

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book must have been the delight of the enemies of the Duchess in Court and society. But Mrs. Manley's claim to fame rests upon her audacity rather than her talent. The chance encounters of dandies and beauties of easy manners, the duels, the murders, the moralising, were thrown together with little spirit and less craftsmanship.

Secret memoirs which were in reality fiction differed in nothing from "Robinson Crusoe," except that living personages were introduced into imaginary scenes. But, strangely enough, Grub Street failed to see how the new idea might be applied to every situation which invited the story-teller's art, and even Defoe, as we have seen, discovered the better way, only to wander from it. Had luck been kind, Mrs. Manley had gifts to make a worthier mark than that of scandal-monger. She might have been the first of the line of English lady-novelists. But alas! all her life was a struggle to keep body and soul together, and amidst its fever she hopelessly missed her way. Sprung from a good family, she had the misfortune in her youth to be drawn into a bigamous marriage. After that, descent was easy, and her last protector was an alderman of the City. Like Frederick William of Prussia, he had a short way with women. A drill-sergeant's cane, aided by a ready foot, heavily

shod, was the King's method of ruling the gentler sex. In the same homely fashion the Alderman administered domestic affairs, and poor Manley, whose love scenes were so glowing, found the warmth of her own romance sustained at the last by the ferrule.

CHAPTER XXXI

"LA CONSOLATRICE" was the name bestowed by James II. on the only daughter who never sinned against him. This was Louisa Mary, born at St. Germains in 1692, when to the exiled King and Queen the substance of Royal glory was lost for ever, and no happiness remained save such as could be gleaned from the simple ties of home and love.

At the coming of the little girl James was enraptured. He had hoped for a son. But no sooner did the child nestle in his arms than that tenderness for her possessed him which henceforth made her his consolation, just as his boy was the star of his hope.

No reservoir of sympathy, no great effort of imagination is needed to conjecture with what feelings Anne's thoughts turned at times to St. Germains, there to dwell in spirit for delicious moments with her young sister. For she, too, had suffered no wrong at the hands of "La Consolatrice"; and better still, on her she had inflicted none. The Crown she wore could never

be Louisa's while there lived an elder sister, and so the mere fact of the girl's existence conveyed to Her Majesty no reproach.

The blaze of splendour, for which during long years the Court of Louis Quatorze was renowned, burned more feebly as time and affliction pressed heavily on the King; and as the round of gaiety and pleasure slackened a little, the young Prince of Wales and his sister Louisa became in a great measure the darlings of Versailles, now sobered by the rule of Maintenon. When Anne heard of these gracious children leading the dance at some festival at Marli or Trianon, with what hunger of soul must she have looked upon the loneliness of her own childless Court!

As she became accustomed to the sceptre, and all hope vanished that Gloucester's place would ever be filled, this sense of loneliness grew upon her, and more and more the Dead Sea fruit of gratified ambition ceased to please her. The grave is the never-failing salve of bitterness. The grievance, real or fancied, which Anne had so long cherished against her father was dissipated by the tomb. Her brother was the heir to her father's rights; but England had pronounced judgment upon his claim on that beautiful spring day when the people applauded her accession. Yet, if still she feared her brother a little, from

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by Nicolas de Largillière in the National Portrait Gallery.

QUEEN ANNE'S BROTHER, PRINCE JAMES, AND HER SISTER, THE PRINCESS LOUISA, EXILES AT THE COURT OF FRANCE.

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Louisa, at all events, there was no reason for apprehension. By whatever standard judged, Her Majesty was the young Princess's senior. How sweet if she could be her sister's queen!

In the event of the death of the Prince of Wales, Louisa would be the next heir of the House of Stuart; and on this contingency, by no means remote, as the Prince was a delicate lad, many a fair dreamland web was spun.

Mary Beatrice's son, now grown into a youth of nigh eighteen, might have been chosen by a painter to represent the god of love, according to a lively chronicler of St. Germains. But a touch more gentle, more intimate, more graceful is needed to depict the charm of "La Consolatrice" when, as a maid of fourteen, she became the toast of Jacobites at St. James's and the flower coveted by the chevaliers of Versailles. Her hair was of the loveliest shade of brown, just like Queen Anne's. Her complexion, says Anthony Hamilton, was of "the most brilliant yet delicate tints of the fairest flowers of spring," and her arms white and round, with the "plumpness one adores in a divinity in her early teens," rivalled in beauty those of the Queen of England.

In the event of the death of the Prince of Wales, this exquisite creature would almost certainly have been summoned to London to take up the place of Heir-Presumptive to the Throne.

True, she was a Catholic, and Parliament would probably have made no attempt to shake her religious convictions. It would have found for her a Protestant husband, and have left the future in the lap of the gods. But meanwhile the Jacobite matchmakers were not idle. It was for them to forestall the schemes of Parliament and endow Louisa with a bridegroom before the whole might of England should be concerned to force her choice. He to whom was promised this young divinity of St. Germain's, "as good as she was fair," was, it is said, of the most ancient blood of Scotland; and if his fortunate lot in this respect was never fulfilled, the story of how the Princess's affections were pledged by her mother belongs nevertheless to a momentous chapter of Anglo-Scottish history.

The Duke of Hamilton was a man of forty-four when Anne ascended the Throne. He was therefore Her Majesty's senior by but half-a-dozen years, and a time there was when he might have been regarded as an eligible husband for her. At the Court of Charles II. she knew him as a favourite, in her father's household he had a double claim to consideration as the bold scion of the Douglas breed, and as the son-in-law of Robert, Earl of Sunderland. His lineage, his wealth, his talents caused him to be looked upon at the Court of Anne as the leader of the Northern

nobility. The Duke had learned the trade of courtier and politician, not only at Whitehall but at Versailles, but in neither craft had he become altogether an adept. He was too rugged and unbending ever to be the ideal knight of the salon. He was at once too soaring in his ambitions and too cautious ever to be a successful politician at a time when politics were largely a gamble, and the man who won all was he who risked all upon even paltry chances. Hamilton, however, would take risks only when his blood was stirred, or when the stake seemed to him worthy of the first of the Scottish barons.

Like most of the aristocracy of his country, the Duke was a devoted partisan of the Stuarts. He had marched with James to Salisbury, and when the King's cause was lost had the temerity to administer to William a species of public rebuke. Instead of flying either to France or to the service of the new monarch, as so many of his late comrades had done, he waited upon William at Whitehall "by the command of his master the King." His loyalty cost him his liberty. He was sent to the Tower, and while he lay there a prisoner of State, Fate busied herself weaving round him one of the saddest romances in the story of the grim keep.

Hamilton, who was at this date only Earl of Arran, had some time before lost his wife, and to

solace himself in his mourning the widower laid siege to the heart of Lady Barbara Fitzroy, the youngest daughter of Charles II. by the Duchess of Cleveland. She was only eighteen when, betrayed by that in her blood which made her easily won, she walked unsuspecting into the snare spread for her feet by Douglas. To her the favour of so valiant a lover seemed to promise boundless wealth of happiness. At eighteen she could hardly have known her mother as London knew her, but enough she did know to feel thankful to Heaven for a wooer so distinguished Cruelly did the man of thirty requite the Royal maid's trust and affection. They met at Whitehall and at St. James's, and the unhappy daughter of a King, who yet was no princess, hoped, doubtless, that the proud Scot would make her his wife, and the equal in all, save power, of the race to whose vagrant blood she owed her existence.

Barbara lived with her mother at Cleveland House, and her trysts with her lover were no doubt kept after the fashion of the day—at the houses of Indian dames in the City who let out apartments for assignations, and were as deaf and blind to the courtships they fostered as Cupid could desire. Her virago-mother had other business to attend to than that of watching over Barbara, and to the eighteen-year-old daughter of the dead King misfortune came.

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by Sir Peter Lely in the National Portrait Gallery.

BARBARA VILLIERS, DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND
(LADY BARBARA FITZROY'S MOTHER.)

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How the poor girl's heart leaped to her mouth when they told her that her lover was gone to the Tower! Now, indeed, was she undone. In tears she begged of Heaven to grant her a miracle and set free the man who had robbed her of her innocence, but who yet might save her from public shame. The fair prospect from Cleveland House was that day sadly overcast. Her secret would soon be a secret no longer. Her dreaded mother would know. And then God above help her, for she would be in the hands of the Furies! With fear so agonising locked away in her bosom the poor girl dare not go to her lover, dare not question those who could tell her how it fared with him, lest they should read in her face her guilt. And all the while terror fastened its icy clasp more closely on her heart, until it seemed to her that madness itself would be a relief.

Around the unhappy creature the storm broke at last. Her secret was given to the world, and all alone she was left to bear the ordeal. The high hopes she had reposed in Hamilton were crushed, every one, and she was doomed at eighteen to irretrievable ruin.

It was women, too, alas! who set the seal upon the grave in which was buried away her every hope of happiness. Hamilton might have married the gentle victim of this sombre romance. But Hamilton's mother and Queen Mary allied

themselves to extinguish every chance of Barbara's redemption. The release of her lover from the Tower was made conditional on her retirement to a convent. It was a bitter punishment to be robbed at one blow of her baby boy, of the father of her child, and of the liberty which at the dawn of womanhood had proved her destruction. Douglas accepted his freedom at the price. Braver men had lived and died in the Tower rather than make half so base a sacrifice of chivalry. But tired of captivity, tired of the prize too lightly won, the prisoner signed, in effect, the girl's death-warrant. With empty arms Lady Barbara was banished to France; and there, in the convent of Pontoise, she pined away and died of heart-sickness for a sight of the baby face and the soft touch of the baby fingers that were always beckoning her away from the convent solitude to a cradle beyond the seas.

The hapless lady, thus cheated of her life, was soon forgotten by her unworthy lover. The next recipient of his affections was Elizabeth, daughter of the house of Gerard, who brought him a noble fortune. This marriage at least did credit to Hamilton's foresight. It brought him great domains in England, so that in the south as well as in the north he became a territorial magnate, who might claim equal consideration with the English dukes. In this marriage, ap-

proved by pride, Hamilton's kindred rejoiced, just as before they had mourned for his folly in loving the friendless Barbara. But the same destiny that wove his gorgeous wedding garment wove likewise his shroud, and folding it carefully, put it aside for a day as yet afar off, but a day that assuredly would come, when the tragedy of Pontoise would be avenged.

When, in the early years of Anne's reign, the question of the union between England and Scotland was pressed forward for settlement, its most resolute opponent was the Duke of Hamilton. The proposed union was the only certain bulwark against civil war in the future, for the Parliament of Edinburgh, animated by a spirit of sturdy independence, was little disposed to arrange a compromise with Westminster regarding the succession to the Throne. While Anne, therefore, united for the moment the Crowns of the two kingdoms, there was no certainty that after her death one brow would wear the dual diadem. On the contrary, there seemed much likelihood that the sovereignty of the island would again be divided between two Royal houses, and Britain be once more rent with such strife as seemed finally healed by the accession of the first Stuart to the English Throne.

Queen Anne most eagerly desired the Legislative Union. Her Ministers, now more than

ever inclining to the Whigs, gave to the project their cordial support. The first step towards the goal was made when, at Her Majesty's old home at the Cockpit, now used as Government offices, the commissioners representing the two kingdoms met to debate the proposed Treaty of Union. Slowly the negotiations progressed, until at length a bargain was struck, in virtue of which the Scots consented to merge their ancient nation in the larger and wealthier and more powerful kingdom. The Scots went to the Cockpit with the notion that they were to discuss a species of federal partnership; but the Englishmen speedily made it apparent that an understanding on such lines was impossible. Their ideal was one kingdom, a kingdom in which England would enjoy undoubted predominance. And they had their way.

To induce the Estates at Edinburgh to accept the terms agreed upon at the Cockpit in the summer of 1706 the deftest manipulation of political forces was necessary. The last session of the Parliament of Scotland opened in October 1706, with the Duke of Queensberry as Lord High Commissioner, and as Secretary of State the young Earl of Mar, a master of double-dealing, who could not have lost more in the service of the Stuarts had he been an honest man. It would seem that the triumph of the

Union was but slightly, if ever, in doubt so far as the Estates were concerned, unless a ferment of popular feeling should coerce a vacillating section of the legislature into hostility. The supporters of the exiled Royal Family—the Cavaliers, as they called themselves—were the van of the opposition to the Union, and their chief was the Duke of Hamilton.

Through the autumn into the winter the debates continued at Edinburgh, and early in the new year the crisis was in view. The hour was at hand when the Parliament of Scotland would dissolve to meet no more.

Through highlands and lowlands ran the cry for a Bruce, a Wallace! Give them but a chief, and again would they renew their nationhood in blood as valiant as flowed at Bannockburn. There was neither Bruce nor Wallace, but there was the Douglas. The wild blood of the clans was up, and only the signal was needed for their temper to blaze into civil war. . . .

The signal they watched for never came. The old story was repeated of the people being led whither the leader listed. When the decisive day arrived the Duke of Hamilton was dumb. Plain people who wanted but to live and thrive said they were saved, but patriots averred they were betrayed.

They say that Queen Anne implored Hamilton

with all the earnestness of which she was capable to forgo his opposition to the Union, and abstain from a course which threatened the island with the dread scourge of civil war. To enforce Anne's entreaties there came a message to Hamilton from the Court of St. Germains. It was the wish of James Stuart that the Union should take place. The exiled Prince desired to give the sister who had supplanted him this proof of his affection, hoping to obtain in requital some proof of hers. Hamilton was not the man to miss so rare an opportunity of striking a bargain to his advantage. This letter from Lord Middleton, who was Secretary of State at St. Germains, conveying to Hamilton the commands of the titular King, may serve as the first link in the chain which connects the Duke of Hamilton's heir, the young Earl of Arran, with the lovely "La Consolatrice."

Arran was but a child in 1707, but tradition has it that a secret engagement was entered into with Queen Mary Beatrice for the marriage of the little Earl with the Princess Louisa. The Pretender would have weighty grounds for sanctioning an engagement which seemed to weld to his cause the premier Scottish noble. But Louisa had a good chance of being offered the Crown over her brother's head, and Hamilton, more intent on the elevation of his own house

than the restoration of the Stuarts, nurtured, one may be sure, visions of the future of young Arran too dazzling to pass his lips, visions which gave zest to the schemes of the great noble. But these vain imaginings of the haughty parent had no place on the scroll of destiny. They lie buried in oblivion, lost in the gossamer mist, the gossamer confusion of dreams unfulfilled.

When the Act of Union came to the decisive vote, men expected Hamilton to voice the protest of all patriotic Scots before the doomed Parliament, and then, retiring with his followers, inaugurate a secessionist legislature, around which the nation might rally in arms. But at the last moment the Act of Union passed the Estates without the anticipated appeal from the Council to the nation.

Hamilton feigned surprise at the expectations of those who would have him head a national protest. Not he! He never dreamt of such a thing. The patriots regarded him with dismay. The mere politicians were dumbfounded. Their leader Hamilton wanted a leader. It was farce on a scale so grand as to rank as drama, farce for which the dour Scots, who had erected this droll Douglas into a hero, an aspirant for martyrdom, had no laughter. It was too late to recast their plans. All was over because Hamilton had failed; and as he failed his country in the day

of trial, so did Heaven fail him, if in acting as he did he hoped for a brilliant Royal recompense.

The passage of the Act of Union through the English Parliament was marked by sharp contentions, but the measure was never in danger of rejection. In the Lords the Opposition was led by Rochester, Nottingham, and Buckinghamshire, but neither their eloquence nor their arguments did more than fan the prejudices and animosities of politics. That it should be so is no reproach to their talents, for it would be difficult to find statesmanlike reasons for opposing a bargain from which England was certain to gain many precious advantages, and from which no loss could possibly accrue to her. It was a time when every Scottish heart should have been nerved to deeds worthy of a martial race, when tongues fired with eloquence should have aroused the land to a white-heat of patriotic fervour. But the crisis meant no revolution for England. It threatened with extinction nothing dear to the people. It was the death-blow of no tradition. London, unlike Edinburgh, was to lose none of its lustre. The future belonged to England; to Scotland there remained but a past. With so hopeless a case virile opposition was impossible, and the sense of the whole country approved the policy of the Queen and her Government—a policy endorsed post-haste

by Lords and Commons in defiance of the Tory chiefs.

With all the solemnity of a day of great victory Queen Anne, on March 6, 1707, attended the House of Peers to give the Royal sanction to the Anglo-Scottish compact; and closed for ever was the rivalry of long centuries, with all the glamour of brave achievements and dark deeds, immortalised in mettled song and story.

For the triumphs of Marlborough and the triumphs of literature that marked her reign Queen Anne can claim no personal glory. But for this conquest of unconquerable Scotland some small share of laurels are her due. None but a Stuart Sovereign could have reconciled Scotland to this change. Some compensation it was for her loss that a Scottish queen ruled the new kingdom; while over the water there was a Scottish prince well pleased with what had been done, who would succeed his sister! And then Hamilton's son, young Arran, would some day marry Louisa, and in time a prince of the blood of Stuart and Douglas might reign over united Britain. So they gossiped by the fire-sides from the Border to the remotest fastnesses of the Highlands.

On an April morning, three years later, some of these fine castles in the air were sadly dis-

solved. At St. Germains no word was spoken that was not echoed at the Court of Anne; and one day the echo repeated that the Princess Louisa was stricken with the malady which was the scourge of the age. The lovely girl lay sick unto death. The sunshine was eclipsed; "La Consolatrice" had fulfilled her errand and was speeding away.

The beautiful creature, so light of heart, so innocently gay, had been seized with small-pox. With the same brave and gentle spirit that made her the idol of Versailles, she looked death in the face. Mary Beatrice crept to her child's bedside for the last adieux; and, choking with grief, asked her how she felt, as though words were needed to tell her what was coming.

"Madam," replied the dying girl, with some shadow of her natural buoyancy, "behold the happiest of mortals! I have just confessed my sins as well as I could; so that if they said 'Now you die!' I should have no more to do. I resign myself to God; I ask not of Him life—His will be done!"

Such sublime renunciation was more than the Queen could imitate.

"My child!" exclaimed the weeping mother, "I think I cannot say as much. I entreat of God to let you live that you may serve and love Him more devotedly than ever!"

"If I desire to live, it is for that alone," responded the Princess.

The mother's tears fell fast. Why did God, who sent this child, thus hurry her away?

Over the young saint's soul there flowed one last tide of earthly emotion.

Alas! alas! if God would leave her to her mother! She dare not ask so great a boon, with the gates of eternity already swinging open at her advance. But if an angel thrust her back to life she would be glad, because she would so love this darling mother, and tend her, and be so gentle and constant, that never before was there daughter so faithful and kind.

The dying girl's eyes reflected the love swelling in her heart, the love that could never be gratified.

"If I desire to live," she said, "it is for that . . . and because I think I might be some comfort to you."

These were almost her last words. In a little while there was no "Consolatrice," no lily of St. Germains, no Royal bride-elect for Arran, no hope for Hamilton that son of his would share the British throne; and the Prince of Wales had lost in this spotless and gracious girl an ally more potent with Englishmen than all the battalions of France.

CHAPTER XXXII

AS the shades of evening were gathering in the corridors of St. James's Palace one summer's day in the year 1707, a diverting comedy was being enacted within its walls. Amongst the performers there was no laughter. For them it was a solemn affair, to be gone through with long faces. It was the solemnity and the long faces which made the comedy surpassingly droll.

Passing through the darkening galleries and cloisters one came to a remote wing of the palace, where in dingy quarters a gentleman of about forty, pleasant of face, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, kept his Court amongst his books.

This evening he is less serene than is his wont. His apartment has somewhat the air of discomfort one associates with unusual preparations. Everything here is too trim, too mathematical to please John Arbuthnot. His books have been dusted and disarranged. His easy chair is in rebellion; they have made it look formal; it

After the picture by Charles Jervas.

JOHN ARBUTHNOT, M.D.

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is at the angle of irritation with regard to the light, and he can neither rest his feet on the mantelpiece nor on the table.

One must make sacrifices for one's friends or lose them; and John Arbuthnot, physician extraordinary to Queen Anne, was not a curmudgeon to grumble because his rooms were uncomfortably neat to receive Her Majesty and a wedding-party. Yes, a wedding-party, no less; and for a secret wedding, too! Death and damnation! If people would marry, why not by daylight; or if by candle-light, why not in their own rooms!

Arbuthnot was not only a physician, he was a man of wit and learning, and as cheerful as he was gifted. Swift said of him that he was the first wit in London, and Pope celebrated his medical skill in the lines:

> Friend to my life, which did not you prolong,
> The world had wanted many an idle song.

It was an odd chance which introduced Arbuthnot to Royal favour. One day Prince George was taken suddenly ill while at Epsom for the races. Arbuthnot was on the spot, and prescribed so successfully that he was given an appointment at Court. His good sense and breeding soon made him a favourite with the Royal Household. The Queen's instinct for an

honest friend taught her to value him as much for his sincerity as for his skill, whilst she probably derived more benefit from his genial humour than from his physic.

Arbuthnot, as a courtier, was obliged to take sides; and what could a thoroughbred Scot do but follow his heart to the Tories? He had lived too long and knew too much to hate the Whigs. But the "Zarazians"! To Arbuthnot they were not so much a political faction as political brigands, who should be exterminated without benefit of clergy.

His rooms in St. James's were the resort of every pleasant fellow employed at Court, and of all the wits of the town. Thither they made their way of an evening from the theatres and coffee-houses to play at cards and punish a bottle while discussing the latest book, or pamphlet, or comedy. They did justice to the scandal of the hour, and when fresher topics flagged it was always easy to poke fun at the Queen above the Queen—Her Majesty, Sarah.

In the leisure left him by his jovial friends and his Royal patients, Arbuthnot amused himself with his pen, and though his countrymen were still foreigners in England, he produced in his "History of John Bull" one of the raciest compositions of the reign. His jovial mood, however, turned to bitterness when he wrote

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture in the National Portrait Gallery attributed to William Hoare, R.A.

ALEXANDER POPE.

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about the Marlboroughs. In the "Story of the Ghost of St. Albans," the spectre of Sarah's mother was called back from the world of the departed to help the family councils with supernatural lore gleaned in quarters shunned by angels of light. In the ghost story the Duke of Marlborough figures as Avaro, Sarah as Haggite, while Godolphin appears under the elegant nom-de-guerre of Baconface. Their faction is described as making things intolerable at Court for those who would not "compliment or comply with them in their villainy," which was quite true. Nor is the book free from spiteful touches, founded either on current gossip or the result of invention which would have done credit to the talents of Mrs. Manley.

Arbuthnot's wife dwelt with him in the Palace, and lucky was he that if she was either wit or belle, she employed her charms only to make him and his children happy, leaving triumphs of the pen and social victories to her husband. This evening is a proud one for Mrs. Arbuthnot. It is one, too, to test her temper, for not every day does a simple doctor's wife receive a visit from a queen. She rustles round John's chair in her best silk, her finest lace, arranging fresh flowers in the vases, smoothing the curtains and tapestries, putting a final polish on silver and glass, and withal stealing away for an occasional

peep into the looking-glass, to make sure that the ribbons of her cornette have retained their jaunty knots without crease or crumple. The children are bribed into quietude with a promise of sweets on the morrow, and as a pledge of sincerity are given pennies and banished to bed.

Not a pin is amiss in the doctor's drawing-room when the hour warns them that the Queen and the wedding-party are due.

Enter the bridegroom, Samuel Masham, equerry to Prince George.

With outstretched hands Arbuthnot and his wife greeted a young man of about eight-and-twenty, whose air and bearing bespoke one bred from youth to the Court. The newcomer had a pleasant smile for John and a deferential bow for his hostess. But when he had smiled his broadest and bowed his lowest, his powers of entertaining his friends during this most embarrassing five minutes of his life were exhausted. Not that Arbuthnot was at a loss for entertainment. Who could be dull while studying a bridegroom waiting for his bride? Who, with half an eye for the things which excite a kindly smile, one knows not why, could have such a treat and complain of lack of diversion?

Masham, without any pretensions to intellectual equality with Arbuthnot's friends, was, nevertheless, welcome to their circle, and was generally

one of the merry company whose laughter rang through that quarter of old St. James's far into the small hours. The Duchess of Marlborough has left it on record that Samuel's chief function at Court was bowing and smiling, and performing those minor acts of politeness which if omitted in her own case, would certainly have aroused her indignation, and which when fulfilled fired her contempt. His imperturbable temper was an insult; his amiability exasperating. The courtesy which he showed to Abigail branded him as a fool. She could have spent a serene hour watching this silken courtier on the rack and noting the marked variation from his usual placid manner.

The yoke which Sarah had imposed on the Queen and Court had reached the point when everybody should have laughed the tyrant into exile. Here was Anne obliged to steal in the twilight through her own palace to witness in secret the marriage of one of her ladies. But in this world of wonders the wonderful is accepted daily as a pre-ordained commonplace. And with a straight face Arbuthnot rose to receive the Queen of England, now approaching his quarters on tiptoe.

The poor Queen, how her heart beat! It was almost as bad as that night on which she had climbed down the wooden staircase from her chamber in the Cockpit to meet Dorset and

Compton in St. James's Park. If by some unlucky chance Sarah should emerge from one of those shadowy passages! Every door she passed in the corridors seemed to her about to fly open, and, unless she quickened her pace, features would appear in the oaken panels; the eyes of Sarah would stare at her, and the voice of Sarah would shriek at her. On the Queen's heels trod Abigail. Never a beauty, terror did not add to the charms of the bride. She could hardly get her breath with fear as she glided along in her mistress's wake, peering into every corner, shrinking from every alcove. If Sarah pounced upon her she felt she should die of fright; yet love would not be denied. A thousand times as much would she brave for her beloved Masham; and in spite of panic the two ladies made haste to the altar.

Arbuthnot's door was ajar. No storm-tossed mariner ever saw lights in the haven with more thankfulness than did the Queen and her attendant welcome the lamp beaming ahead, whose rays announced the end of the first half of their adventure.

If picture had been painted of Queen and bride entering Arbuthnot's modest lodging, it would doubtless be seen that tears were not far from the eyes of either.

For gracious speeches and niceties of etiquette

there was no time. At any moment, if the Queen were missed from her apartments and search failed to discover her, there might be an uproar. Then all this fine scheme, planned with so much secrecy, would be exposed, and the sinners be at the mercy of the offended Sarah.

Therefore, parson, to your task. A discreet fellow was that same parson. Never a word would cross his lips of the fair deed done that summer evening while the birds settled down for their slumbers under the eaves in Ambassadors' Court.

Quoth Samuel "I will," and the bride, no less eager to have it over, was likewise prompt with the responses. And they were man and wife.

Now the farce grew broader in its absurdity. The bride was only won to be lost. The Queen had again to set out on her travels. Heaven alone knew if luck would this time attend her, and the haven again be reached in safety. Samuel, no doubt, kissed his Abigail, and Abigail treasured the symbol of affection with miserly greed, for it was famine-time in endearments. Both kissed Her Majesty's hands if they had their wits about them, and Arbuthnot, if laughter had not as yet rendered him helpless, followed the fashion.

Then began the retreat. Cautiously the door was opened. Arbuthnot thrust out his head into

the darkness. The road was clear. Masham's eyes were keener. He, too, reconnoitred and reported the neighbourhood free of the enemy. St. George of England, cast here an eye of mercy! Guard the Queen going out on a perilous journey through darksome places where dragons prowled, with no other defence than a shawl drawn closely round her shoulders, so that the monsters might think she was only taking the air on a summer's evening, and so forbear to make a feast on her!

Arbuthnot held the door, and the Queen stole out like a mouse. After her stole the bride, and, no doubt glad to be rid of them, Arbuthnot had a bottle out, and the bridegroom and he set about recovering their spirits.

It was a grateful and happy Queen who at length found herself safely back again in her own quarter of the Palace. Thank Heaven Abigail would not want her on such an errand again! Anyhow, she hoped not. And for this reason and others might the gods be pleased to grant unto Samuel length of days.

The bride, cut off from her bridegroom in the first moments of her felicity, had to celebrate her nuptials as best she could with the Queen. Anne, ever ready with her gold, opened her purse wide on this occasion, and the young wife was enriched with a "round sum," to help her to endure with equanimity this cruel separation from her lord.

And now that the knot was tied, the maid a wife, the equerry a bridegroom, and not a soul the wiser save a few trusty friends, what next? The Queen looked at Abigail and Abigail at the Queen, each reading what comfort she might in the other's eyes. Prince George doubtless knew. But His Royal Highness was not a man to lead the lovers out of the wood. "Est-il possible! Hill and Masham married. . . . Est-il possible!" . . . and the Prince would wish the happy lovers at the devil, for well he knew that when Sarah should hear the news the Palace would be no place for a quiet man, who had no higher ambition than to amuse himself with a set of carpenter's tools in his own workshop.

Harley is reckoned amongst those who knew of the wedding at Arbuthnot's. He may, indeed, have been one of the witnesses, while the way in which the affair was carried out suggests the hand of the scheming Secretary. Harley had at the time reached a turning-point in his career. He clearly foresaw that he should go forward to fresh conquests or lose all that he had gained. The reason why Sarah hated him lies upon the surface. That he was an ambitious man who had no mind to remain a humble satellite of her clique sufficiently explains her antipathy. Harley had the suspicious temperament which makes the closing of the smallest rift in friendly rela-

tions almost impossible. He had gradually grown to doubt Godolphin's sincerity towards him, and his doubts could not fail to engender that coolness and distrust of which they were supposed to be the consequence.

Meanwhile, aided by his cousin Abigail, he had already made progress with the work of alienating the Queen from Godolphin, and preparing her mind to seize with courage the first opportunity that should arise of freeing herself from the family thrall. Frequently in the evening Harley visited the Palace to confer with the Queen and her waiting-woman. These conferences were often disguised as concerts, Abigail strumming the harpsichord while the Secretary proceeded with the education of his Sovereign in the science of political mine and counter-mine. The goal he set before the Queen was freedom from the tyranny of Sarah and her associates; and when promises were going the musician was not forgotten. She should have a husband, and, egad, a Court gentleman at that! And, as good as his word, she was now the wife of Sam Masham.

This marriage was a Blenheim for Harley. It would give Abigail a position of independence, a degree of strength, which she could derive from no other species of alliance. Masham was nothing more than a plain, sensible fellow. But were he

a person even more mediocre, he would still be a precious acquisition to a maiden lady engaged in dangerous intrigues so long as he shared her perils and anxieties, and could lend her a trifle from his masculine stock of courage when her heart misgave her. Abigail, who had so much to lose, would second Harley, who had so much to gain, in prevailing upon the Queen to let the marriage take place in secret, lest Sarah's interference should in some unforeseen way disorganise their plans and condemn the waiting-woman to a new lease of spinsterhood.

The Palace was full of Sarah's spies, who were proud to gain the great lady's ear with any story, small or great; but, blinded with pride, she scorned to think of Abigail as a rival. Let her play and sing to the Queen. Let Harley act the Court lackey and fawn upon the Court menials. What mattered it? The real master was Marlborough, marching from victory to victory, and if the Queen was not careful. . . . It was only fifty years since Cromwell had filled the chair of State, and Cromwell was not so great a man as her Duke.

Great, indeed! Why, she had won more political victories in a year than Cromwell had in his lifetime. The wild dreams which filled Sarah's head have no place in her letters. But how could they? Who was worthy to behold

their magnificence? Who could be trusted with visions which, when spoken, became treason, and the penalty of treason was the block? But the woman's pride, her domineering temper, her contempt for the Queen, her want of scruple, her great ability, all put together, speak eloquently of the hopes that filled her mind, when turning to the Court one sees there a lonely and friendless Queen, with an invalid husband, without a child or kinsman to support her. It was one of those epochs in history when strength and genius, untrammelled by conscience, had their chance. It was the time for a Dictator if he were at hand.

Sarah had, however, fallen into error in supposing that the Court had ceased to be the centre of political life. In neglecting St. James's to cabal under circumstances more agreeable, she was building on sand. But at the moment she might be pardoned for failing to see that it was so. The reins of power were in her fingers. Godolphin, always an easy-going man, was too old, too indolent, too timid to oppose her, if he had any desire to do so. The woman was so identified with success that to be her enemy was like challenging Fate.

The Duchess had recently achieved what she regarded as one of the most important successes of her life—a success which seemed to promise

to her family a new accession of strength and power. She had succeeded in introducing into the Government one of the most daring and most gifted of the younger nobility, her son-in-law Charles, Earl of Sunderland.

In the very year of Anne's accession Earl Robert had passed away, having during the reign of William retrieved something of the power he had lost at the Revolution ; but nothing else did he retrieve, for a bankrupt in honour he could not but remain to the end. Charles was in all respects save one the worthy son of his sire. The suavity that made possible the successes and the treachery of the one was denied to the other. His father's equal in intellect, he was his inferior in manners and in those personal graces which enable a politician to profit to the full by his higher gifts. As a youth Sunderland posed as a Republican, would not be called by his title, and favoured the abolition of the Lords. But this red-hot Democrat, this fanatic for equality, had an ungovernable temper, the temper of the true autocrat. In him the Duchess of Marlborough recognised a kindred spirit—as, indeed, they were, twin Furies!

Sunderland married early in life a daughter of the Cavendishes, but this lady survived the union only a brief space. Then Charles went a-courting to the house of Marlborough, and won as his

second wife Lady Anne Churchill, the Duke's second daughter. The Duke and his son-in-law had hardly a trait in common. The elder man had a perfect temper, and was a master of diplomacy, only touching the tangled threads of politics at critical seasons, when, if interference was not to his advantage, abstinence would assuredly be fatal. To be above party, using each side at his pleasure, was the Duke's ideal. But Sunderland was a born agitator, a leader of faction, an intriguer, a man whose violent spirit made obedience impossible for him, and whose undoubted capacity, taken in conjunction with his other gifts, made him one of the most dangerous subordinates an aged minister could allow into his Cabinet.

This *enfant terrible* succeeded Sir Charles Hedges in 1706, as a result of the Duchess of Marlborough's inveterate intrigues. Queen Anne dreaded him, Godolphin was no less afraid. But Sarah was imperative; Sunderland she would advance, and Godolphin having yielded to her, Malborough, though doubtful of the results, let her have her way. The Queen remained obstinate while obstinacy was possible, but she could not hold out against the Lord Treasurer and Sarah, and so Sunderland was made Secretary of State. This was in December 1706, and thus he was the first, though the youngest, of the famous

Whig junto of five to enter the Queen's Ministry, the other four being Orford, who as Admiral Russell had won La Hogue, Halifax, Somers, and Wharton.

No sooner had the measures connected with the Anglo-Scottish Union been completed, than the way was clear for the restless Sunderland to begin his schemes for his personal aggrandisement. The gifted Somers was the only man on his own side to whose opinion he would listen with respect. The other members of his party, however venerable, however learned, or accomplished, or experienced, received scant courtesy at the young Secretary's hands. He was there to win for himself. His motto was "Sunderland!" His policy "Sunderland!" Nothing else mattered. Restrained by no old-fashioned virtue, scornful of chivalry, impatient of convention, he flouted his seniors, and turned to cabal with any section which favoured his whims. A young man with qualities such as these, backed by great wealth, great talent, and great family influence, was the very man to throw the already tangled web of politics into hopeless confusion. Harley recognised in the newcomer an irreconcilable opponent. Harley in the last resource would always compromise: Sunderland would blow up the magazine and send citadel and garrison to destruction.

Such temperaments might find, while out of office, a common basis of action, but as colleagues in a Government, each was bound to repel the other. Godolphin, therefore, should choose between them, and with the Whig junto backing the Earl, and Sarah backing both, who could doubt what Godolphin's decision would be? Sunderland was not the equal in intellect of the ablest amongst either his allies or his enemies; but he had one quality which, combined with such parts as he did possess, made him the terror if not the master of all. He was not afraid of defeat. His turbulent spirit revelled in the sport of battle. To this Captain Bluffe of politics,

> Fighting for fighting's sake was sufficient cause;
> Fighting to him was religion and the laws.

To his rashness there was no limit, and fortune in a mood to be stormed favoured him in a fashion that would have well rewarded the most assiduous court. He was a rash man in the midst of men renowned for caution, and in their trepidation they humoured and tolerated and conciliated this terrible fellow.

Sunderland, at a later period, was one of the most violent of Abigail's enemies, and at a time when her marriage was still a secret, he had already, doubtless, marked her down for pro-

scription. Much as the Queen dreaded Sarah, she was, after all, only a woman, who never by any chance could enter Lords or Commons and attack her before the world. The Marlboroughs should work in the dark, or publish themselves as the basest of ingrates. But Sunderland owed the Queen nothing; on the contrary, hatred of the House his father had preyed upon, then ruined, was in his blood. It was more than a policy; it was the passion of his life. In the predicament in which the Hill wedding had placed Her Majesty, this noble bully was in some respects more to be dreaded than Sarah. Heaven alone knew what he would dare to say from his place in Parliament, for compared with him Sarah was a paragon of discretion and of mercy. But Royal secrets will out; and soon the ferocious Earl and the Duchess knew all.

The Duchess of Marlborough was Keeper of the Privy Purse, and, like a vigilant wardress, she inquired to what purpose a certain "round sum" had been applied.

"For Mistress Hill," they told her.

"All that money for Hill!" Instantly the Duchess set herself to discover all. Let the spies be paraded and tell their tales, for rank treason was afoot. Gifts from the Privy Purse were never intended for Hill. Before God and man, the Churchills had first and last claim on that purse.

First and last be hanged! They claimed the purse itself. Now then, spies, your stories.

The Duchess's inquiries confirmed her worst suspicions. She was betrayed. There had been a marriage in the Palace, and nobody had asked her consent. Why did not the Palace fall? Why did not the prayers choke the priest, and the responses the bride and bridegroom? Was the Queen mad? The world was all awry, and creation was inverted. To quote her own words, Sarah learned that "Mrs. Masham often came to the Queen when the Prince was asleep, and she was generally two hours every day in private with her. And I likewise then discovered beyond all dispute Harley's correspondence and interest at Court by the means of this woman."

Oh! ungrateful Abigail, thus to have won the Queen's heart, Harley's confidence, and Sam Masham's hand, without the leave of your early benefactress. Oh Abigail, Abigail! And your eyes were always downcast, as though there were no Samuel for you. And now the murder was out! Hussy! Minx! Jade! Upstart! Beggar! Fool! . . . This would be the panegyric of the bride, in shrill soprano, for the delectation of the Court.

The Duke of Marlborough cared little who was married or given in marriage within the Palace walls, so that men and money were voted him to

continue a career which piled up for him wealth and glory. He therefore counselled the Duchess to behave with prudence. But for Sarah such counsel was vain. For her war could have but one close, victory or defeat. Divide the spoils she never would; and since Harley had caballed against her she would never rest until his ruin was accomplished.

Fortune was singularly kind to the Duchess at this juncture. Scotland was seething with discontent, and a French invasion was talked of at Versailles. In the coffee-houses they said the Queen, weary of strife at home and abroad, would see with relief her brother enter the Kingdom and demand at the head of an army his rights. If she could manage it, he should have them.

In a wholly unexpected fashion came the opportunity, coveted so eagerly by his enemies, of effecting Harley's disgrace. The Marshal de Tallard, who had been taken prisoner by Marlborough at Blenheim, was still a captive in England. The Marshal frequently wrote to Chamillard, Minister of War to Louis. Tallard's letters were not, however, dispatched direct to France. They were, in the first instance, sent to Harley's office for censorship. It cost Harley dear that he did not himself read the Marshal's epistles. A clerk in his office named William Gregg was employed to translate them. Gregg endeavoured

in his modest way to emulate the example of Robert, Earl of Sunderland, and other politicians whose names were no doubt familiar to him. In forwarding to Chamillard one of Tallard's letters, he introduced a billet-doux of his own, offering to sell to France the secrets of his country. Gregg's fortune was made had the post not miscarried. The despatch was, however, intercepted in Flanders and returned to London.

Harley's friends were thunderstruck, not at the news but at the discovery of it. Evidence to incriminate the Secretary of State there was none. But it was impossible that he could escape unscathed from a position which presented to his enemies so many and such formidable avenues of attack. Gregg was tried and condemned to death. Yet Harley endeavoured to hold his ground. Marlborough and Godolphin threatened to resign if he were not dismissed, and by way of testing the strength of the Queen's resolution to stand by him, absented themselves from the Council. It was but a ruse, for Marlborough was not disposed to force a crisis, and Godolphin was but a reed in the storm. Somerset, however, turned the scale in the Council by throwing his weight against Harley. Business, he said, could not proceed without the general, and the Queen, much against her will, found herself obliged to deprive Harley of his seals,

which she handed to Henry Boyle, Addison's friend. It was a complete triumph for the junto, for Henry St. John, the Secretary of War, Sir Simon Harcourt, the Attorney-General, and Sir Thomas Mansell, Comptroller of the Household, followed him into retirement.

CHAPTER XXXIII

"JE vous seconderai!"

Chamillard was diffident, and thus with superb conceit did Louis XIV. encourage him when making him his Secretary for War. The Minister was dismayed at the prospect, as well he might be, for France was bleeding to death. It was a time for a Richelieu or a Mazarin, and Chamillard knew that he was neither. The King to be sure, would second him. His Majesty's promise was registered. And Louis' confidence in himself was so justified that here was his country a wilderness, his armies shattered, his marshals discredited—and Chamillard reduced to despair!

Louis was now seventy years old. The magnificent dreams cherished during the decades of his prosperity were fast departing, and the King, slowly awakening from the narcotic of pride to cold reality, saw the tomb at the end of the vista. He still maintained his dauntless pose. But the pose no longer deceived even himself. He wanted peace. Madame de Maintenon wanted it. Poor Chamillard was dying for it.

Peace indeed there should have been, but that the ruling faction at the English Court was not yet sated with blood. Longingly Queen Anne looked around for some way of restoring tranquillity. But the year 1708 opened for her amid events the most depressing. The dismissal of Harley, and the disappearance of St. John and the other Tories from the Government, had made the Whigs very nearly absolute masters of England, and they girded themselves for a war which seemed destined to go on for ever.

To France it had now become a fight for her very existence. Blenheim had only been the first of a long series of misfortunes, the plinth of a pyramid of ruin which had gone on ascending year by year. The gods fought with Marlborough, and against them who could fight? The seer that speaks in every heart warned Louis that he had had his share of conquests, and that another nation and another generation were in their turn the favourites of fickle fortune. His belief in his star was fast expiring. One could detect its last flicker in his welcome to his old friend Villars after the defeat of Ramillies.

"At our time of life, Marshal," said Louis, "one is no longer fortunate."

It was a jest tipped with the bitterness of age, a jest that was at once a lament and a prophecy of evil.

Ramillies had struck terror to the heart of Louis as he saw it followed in quick succession by the fall of all the important places in the Spanish Netherlands. Not but that French gallantry had at times its laurels. Marshal Villars had left a ball-room at Strasburg to fall upon the Margrave of Bareith, inflicting upon him so signal a defeat that his victorious troops overran Germany almost to Blenheim. In Spain the tide of victory flowed, on the whole, in favour of young Philip of Anjou, sent out so grandiloquently from Versailles to rule at Madrid. The gallant and erratic Earl of Peterborough, nephew of him who had brought Mary Beatrice a bride to England, had performed prodigies of valour and daring on behalf of the Archduke Charles. But one of Sunderland's first and most ungracious acts on entering the Government of the Queen was to recall him to England. The Earl was, however, speedily avenged for this indignity.

At Almanza, on April 25, 1707, the Duke of Berwick completely routed the allies. The Austrian claimant to the Throne was, as a consequence, barely able to maintain a foothold in the Peninsula; and Philip, thanks to the son of Arabella Churchill, the nephew of the great Duke, his enemy, was practically master of Spain. At Toulon, also, success attended the armies of Louis. The fortress was invested by Prince

Eugene and the Duke of Savoy, supported by an English fleet under Sir Cloudsley Shovel. Eugene and his cousin, the Duke, were checkmated by Marshal Tesse, and obliged to raise the siege; while hardly less fortunate for Louis was the shipwreck, while homeward bound, of Anne's gallant admiral and his fleet off the Scilly Isles.

But Louis was not deceived by these passing gleams of victory. France was exhausted by the drain of this interminable warfare. Her Treasury was bankrupt, her manhood sadly thinned. The King looked to Chamillard for the blood and treasure necessary to press home success, to meet the wastage of defeat. But Chamillard's hands were empty. Frenchmen were not immortal. They could not go on for ever fighting the richer and more populous half of Europe.

The King turned for cheer to his nobles, but, in truth, they had none for him. They told him that only boys and grandsires remained to follow his colours to the field. At the gates of their *châteaux* women and children were crying for bread. The homesteads were in ruins; the fertile plains lay untilled; the orchards and vineyards grew wild; and the herds roamed untended, for the husbandmen had followed the drums to the camp, more often than not to return no more. Everywhere there was

mourning and tribulation. In *château* and cottage widow and orphan mingled their tears, and nothing of brightness remained save the invincible belief of France in France.

On any conditions, therefore, which would preserve to him some shred of dignity, some vestige of pride, the King was willing to conclude peace. He was content that Philip should relinquish all claim to the Spanish Throne, to which the Archduke Charles should succeed. To Holland he would cede all the strong places in the Spanish Netherlands, and all he would ask in return was that, as some salve to French prestige, his grandson should be compensated with Milanese territory, Naples, and Sicily. But the Emperor Joseph, supported by the Whigs, would yield nothing. Not an acre should Philip have, not a castle. The Archduke should inherit the whole Spanish Empire, and nothing less; and no concession should soften for the aged King the abasement of his country.

France was not so utterly broken in spirit as to bow to the humiliating terms of the allies. In Flanders she had a hundred thousand men, commanded by the brilliant and dissolute Duc de Vendôme. This army was the hope of Louis in his country's extremity. The defence of the East was entrusted to Villars. In the cabinet of Madame, the King discussed with her and

Chamillard the problems of the war, and sent his orders to the field. But he was no longer omniscient. At seventy he had awakened to the truth, and sad as was the belated discovery, happily it had come before Marlborough was at the gates of Paris. Fearful, then, lest his plans should fail, he cast around for a device which would mitigate the disaster should Vendôme's host collapse and the allies pour over the frontiers. He would invade England!

Anne's brother was at hand to be the ready instrument of this design. To the youth it was the chance of his life. Only twenty years before, in the midst of a Christmas storm, his mother had fled with him from London, a babe in arms. At twenty, bred up a Frenchman, how could he know that if a blameless Queen, with an infant Prince of Wales at her breast, could not conquer England a foreign army never would! So he leaped at the opportunity of striking a blow for his father's Crown. The Prince's Secretary of State, Lord Middleton, was willing too. A Jacobite officer, Colonel Hooke, had already explored Scotland, learning the sentiments of the Scottish chiefs. Hamilton was too ill to see him, but sent him gracious messages through a priest. Other leading nobles were as providentially stricken with illness. But only let the Prince land with five thousand trained soldiers,

and never did men out of health mend more swiftly. From the poorest gentleman to the premier baron would they flock to his banner.

The Highlanders were, to a man, for a prince who was himself a clansman, while the Lowlanders were so exasperated by events following the Union, that two-thirds of them were rebels at heart. It is said that swarms of revenue officers had been introduced from England, who enforced payment of the new taxes with a vigour little relished by the Scots. Were they a conquered people to give Cæsar his due with the precision of clockwork; above all, to drop it into the palm of a Sassenach? By St. Andrew, it was gall, and the only prince for Scots was one who would put these smooth-tongued loons of revenue officers trooping south! The resentment thus aroused was so artfully fomented by the friends of the exiled Royal Family, that many who had been partisans of William now ardently prayed for the restoration of the Stuarts and the customs of the olden times.

What Godolphin was thinking of while Scotland was thus being goaded into rebellion, Heaven alone knows. He might, indeed, have been courting civil war. There were only a couple of thousand regular troops in Scotland, and many of these were disaffected. The castles and forts were in a ruinous state, while in Edin-

burgh Castle was hoarded the tempting treasure paid by England as compensation for changes incidental to the Union. The Scottish people generally were well armed, and to organise a formidable force it was only necessary that the Pretender should land at the head of an expedition sufficient to protect his camp during the process of enrolment. There was, indeed, no power in Scotland to cope with a national rising. The nobles and people wanted James; and the Crown was waiting for him, could he but set foot on his native heath.

For the invasion of Scotland a French fleet was assembled at Dunkirk, and four thousand men embarked. On March 4, 1708, Henry Boyle apprised the House of Commons of the designs of France, and of the English preparations to defeat them. Sir George Byng, with a fleet of overwhelming strength, was lying in wait for the enemy. Ten battalions had been ordered home from Flanders, and the troops in Ireland were marched to the north in readiness to cross over to Scotland.

The young Prince set sail for Britain under an unlucky star. He was ill with measles at the call to arms, just as his father was ill at Salisbury Plain when his Crown was trembling in the balance and the Royalists wanted but a bold lead to victory.

The Prince was equally unfortunate in the commander of the expedition, upon whose ardour in the cause so much depended. Comte de Fourbin was a gallant sailor, who during half a century had sailed the main in the service of his country. A sea-rover more daring England herself had never bred than this hero of innumerable battles, who had proved his mettle on land as well as on sea; and in enterprises that demanded skill as well as bravery had won renown. In the course of his dare-devil career he had penetrated to Siam, where he was made Commander-in-Chief of the forces of the Empire, but growing homesick for the only land in all the world that could for long be a mother to this doughty knight-errant, he returned to France. For a little while the coldness of the King was the penalty of the distinction attained by him in the East. But energy, valour, and ability soon blotted out the memory of his transgressions, and obtained for him such favour with Louis that he was one of the few officers given carte blanche by the King when entrusted with a command. Fourbin, however, was not enamoured of this descent on Scotland. He knew that whoever obtained glory from it, there would be little for him, seeing how inadequate were his ships. But Louis felt that the dauntless sailor possessed all the intrepidity and genius needed for so

desperate an exploit. And Fourbin, indeed, was the man. But his enthusiasm should be kindled. He should love the Prince, should love Scotland; and unfortunately for James there were no such incentives to inspire him to prodigies of valour. The Fourbin who sailed with him was not Fourbin the Bayard, but Fourbin, a cold, accomplished, and sceptical seaman.

The Comte de Gace, to whom was entrusted the command of the troops, was a veteran whose lifetime had been passed marching from battlefield to battlefield in the Low Countries and in Germany. He was probably chosen for this affair because he had served with James II. in Ireland, directing the Royal troops at the siege of Londonderry. But however skilful a general Gace might be, he was helpless until Fourbin had disembarked his army on the Scottish coast.

Admiral Fourbin's fleet had ill-luck from the start. As a naval adventure it was a forlorn hope, for the fleet under Byng had only to encounter to destroy it. But had the Prince once been safely landed in Scotland, the whole situation would have undergone a lightning change. Byng's ships could not penetrate the Highlands. "To the Frith of Forth!" was Fourbin's signal to his fleet, and Byng, at his heels, signalled pursuit. But the winds took command of the expedition, and the French

were driven to Dunstaffnage. Turning south, when the weather served, Fourbin at last arrived off Edinburgh, and fast as a flying-post could carry the news London knew. Panic seized the capital. The victories of Marlborough over the marshals of Louis had not emancipated the people from dread of France. The tradespeople flew to save their treasure, and there was such a run upon the bank that but for Government aid, it would have been obliged to close its doors.

While troops were making forced marches to the north, Byng and Fourbin were lying at anchor in the Frith of Forth, each ignorant of the presence of the other. A French signal gun, however, gave the English admiral the alarm, and at break of day his ships were cleared for action, and ready for the invaders.

The precious hours of darkness had been wasted by the French in vain contentions. What would they do with the young Prince? The general was for putting him ashore, the admiral for keeping him afloat. The Prince himself was eager to land. But when morning came, nothing had been done. Had the Prince but flung himself into the Frith of Forth and struck out alone for the land of his fathers, hundreds of brave fellows would have followed and supported him to the shore. And Scotland

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the miniature by Alexis Simeon Belle in the National Portrait Gallery.

PRINCE JAMES FRANCIS EDWARD STUART, CHEVALIER DE ST. GEORGE.

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would have hailed with Celtic delirium this gallant Prince thrown into her arms by the ocean.

During the running fight which ensued, pitiable was the plight of young James. As slowly the rugged shores of Scotland melted from view, the kingship, through which he had already lived in imagination, slipped from him. It was a rehearsal over again of the bitterness of his father's flight. What would his mother say after all her prayers and counsels? She had sent him out to a great campaign with London as his destination. There he was to have welcomed her. She had trembled for his life; and here he was being hurried back to St. Germains without having unsheathed his sword. In his rage and despair he begged to be put ashore, but that was impossible in the midst of a race for life and death.

Byng captured one ship, the *Salisbury*. In Parliament a question was raised as to whether he had done his best—a question that some fifty years later was destined to be of tragic import to the admiral's son. Parliament, however, professed itself satisfied, which was certainly the feeling of its chiefs, who would have found the Pretender alive in their hands a greater calamity than defeat. On board the *Salisbury* some persons of note had been made

prisoners, including the aged Lord Griffin, and two sons of the Earl of Middleton—John, Lord Claremount, and Charles Middleton.

The Jacobite attempt had thus ingloriously failed, but the Whigs were in the tantalising position of being unable to take full advantage of their good luck. The Northern lords suspected of complicity in the affair were summoned to London, foremost amongst them being the Duke of Hamilton, who once more found himself quartered in the Tower. Conscious of his prudence, if not of his innocence, Hamilton endured with composure his seclusion. His stay in the Tower was but a brief one, being terminated by one of those magical transformations which sometimes make politics as bewildering as some eccentric dance.

Parliament had been prorogued in April, and the Whig chiefs were making the most energetic efforts to establish the supremacy of their party in Court and Parliament. Not content with the removal of Harley, St. John, and the other Tories from the Administration, they urged Godolphin to deprive the Earl of Pembroke of the office of Lord-President of the Council and confer it upon Lord Somers. To Prince George, Somers was odious because of the attacks he had directed upon the management of the Admiralty, and the Queen would not, in consequence, hear of the

proposal. But here was a group that would not be baffled while any expedient, however questionable, remained untried. The election of representative peers for Scotland was pending, and seemed to present to the Whigs an opportunity of reducing the Queen to compliance, and of punishing Godolphin for his weakness in brooking her opposition. With the approval of Sunderland, overtures were made to Hamilton, who agreed to support the Whig candidates in opposition to the nominees of the Court.

This amazing treaty was consecrated by the Duke's release from the Tower on the bail of three leading Whigs—the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Wharton, and the Earl of Halifax. For the fulfilment of his part of the compact the Duke forthwith set out for Scotland, where, however, the Court party emerged triumphant from the elections. With Hamilton in high favour with the Whigs, his fellow-suspects could not be treated with rigour. Even those taken in arms shared in the general clemency. Lord Griffin, who had been condemned to death, was reprieved, while the Earl of Middleton's sons were set at liberty by command of the Queen.

The Whig alliance with Hamilton afforded only a passing reason why the chiefs of the party should close their eyes to the tenderness shown the partisans of the Pretender. Had measures

of severity been adopted, the Earl of Middleton would, it is thought, have published such proofs of double-dealing as would in all likelihood have brought Marlborough and Godolphin to the Tower. Nor is it certain that the Queen herself would have escaped discomfiture.

Louis' plan for easing the death-grip tightening upon France by stirring up civil war in England having failed, depression settled upon Versailles. The last hopes of the King now rested upon Vendôme and his hundred thousand men. Marlborough, the danger of invasion having passed, left immediately for the Continent; and the exiled Prince, under the title of Chevalier de St. George, bade farewell to his mother, to seek renown as a volunteer of France in the campaign against his countrymen which culminated in Oudenarde.

From the camp of the Imperialists there came to the French lines a despatch for the Chevalier de St. George. It was from Marlborough. It condoled with him on "the failure of his late project, which he thought well planned; chid him for not having previously acquainted him with his design, as he could have ensured its success; encouraged him to hope for some other favourable opening; and bid him rest assured that he anxiously watched for opportunities of convincing him of his zeal."

What high hopes revived in the bosom of the young Stuart as he read this letter! It was wine to a heart plunged in despondency by his recent failure, and with joyous spirit he marched with his comrades to the siege of Oudenarde. With Marlborough, the mighty Marlborough, his friend, his Crown was as safe as though he held the keys of the Tower of London. To Oudenarde!

To fire the spirits of the soldiery, Louis had sent his grandson, the young Duke of Burgundy, to share with Vendôme the command. It was a fatal stroke of policy. Vendôme was an abandoned rake, a heartless, brilliant cynic. The other was an earnest and pious youth, who would have made a good lieutenant, but was totally unfitted to be the colleague and, in virtue of his birth, the superior of such a man. The defeat of Oudenarde was the penalty of so unwise a division of command. Whole regiments marched where they pleased. Vendôme gave orders, Burgundy countermanded them. Thousands were killed, and thousands more were made prisoners for want of a general to lead them to safety. In the ranks of the English on that day of victory young George of Hanover, afterwards George II., fought bravely, while with the routed but no less valorous French the Chevalier de St. George was fulfilling the destiny which ever reserved him for the fallen standard.

At Versailles, Louis waited anxiously for tidings from the field. How his withered hands trembled as he tore open despatches! But the pose of the imperturbable gentleman never deserted him, and, tremble as he would, there was a stately jest on his pallid lips. It was only in his oratory, before the altar, that the pose was laid aside, and, like the humblest dame in the land weeping for husband and sons, the King begged that the chalice of wrath might pass from his suffering country. Great God, for peace! Oh, that the red flood might be stemmed and France smile again! How lonely is an old king without a laurel left him. . . . Hush! Was that strange, distant noise the tramp of advancing armies? Was the avalanche at his gates? How one takes alarm as one grows old, and one hears and sees more with the heart than with ears and eyes! It was only the wind in the trees, the wind sweeping through the aisles and avenues across the park from the frontier, the blood-drenched frontier. Heaven grant that was but all! And yet he had lived long enough to know that many a terrified old man who tries to smile at the spectres conjured up by voices in the night-winds awakes on the morrow to find that warnings and prophecies had been moaned in wordless tongue around his casement.

CHAPTER XXXIV

"HOLD your tongue, madam," cried the Duchess of Marlborough.

"Hold yours," retorted the Queen.

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" roared the people.

"Shame on you for an ungrateful Queen," chimed in Sarah.

"Silence!" snapped the Queen, trembling with fear.

And again the people's acclamation, "Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! Long live the Queen! God bless the Queen!"

This tournament of abuse between Queen Anne and the Duchess of Marlborough began in the Royal carriage, as the State procession to St. Paul's to make thanksgiving for Oudenarde was wending its way up Ludgate Hill. What the Duchess said to Anne, what Anne said to the Duchess, varies in the different narratives. But that the quarrel began in the State coach is certain, and it is equally so that it continued as they entered the Cathedral and took their places.

The Queen, on that mid-August day of 1708, wore no jewels. It was this absence of adornment which incensed the Duchess, and, taking it as a slight upon herself, she reproached Anne with warmth and freedom.

Sarah must have been dumbfounded for a moment with surprise when the Queen, usually so composed, lost her temper and hurled back at her epithet for epithet. At last the worm had turned, and had proved not to be a worm at all, but a veritable Tartar.

The Duchess, as Mistress of the Robes, had arranged Anne's attire for the Thanksgiving ceremony. She had intended that the Queen's vesture should be ablaze with jewels. But Anne had not the spirit to array herself in diamonds as for a festival. Her heart was sick. The victorious English Queen was a broken and a sorry woman. And so the jewels, emblematic of joy, were laid aside. Sarah blamed Mrs. Masham. But Masham's hand need not be traced in the touch of mourning which distinguished the Queen on a day of national rejoicing. It was to a Hand unseen whose presence oppressed her that she paid this mark of deference—the Hand of Death.

The Queen was at Windsor when they brought her news of Oudenarde. Not at the Castle, however, was it that the courier found her this time,

but at the cottage where she was living, almost alone with Prince George, with the simplicity of a plain gentlewoman. The Prince was dying, and she would have the close of his life free from the constraints of a rank which had brought to neither of them one hour of real happiness. In her melancholy retirement, tending her suffering husband, the Queen heard without exultation of Oudenarde. Death was in the air. She could almost feel the icy presence. Year by year they had dug graves and called the gaping trenches glory, and expected her to rejoice above the open clay and the lines of dead men.

"Oh, Lord! when will all this bloodshed cease!" Thus she cried out in her grief, oppressed with the vision of slaughter, and the gladness of humble folk obliterated in tears by desolate hearths. Everything worth living for was gone. Her husband was departing. Her own health was being steadily undermined by care. There was no peace in her household, none in her government, none at home, none abroad. Everywhere there was confusion and death; and yet this unteachable Sarah, with the heart of flint, would deck herself in diamonds.

As the autumn advanced, Prince George grew gradually worse, and all England knew that the end of a union, fruitful only in sorrow

and disappointment, was at hand. A visit to Bath had seemingly benefited the doomed Prince. A change for the better was, however, but transitory, and in the rural solitude of Kensington Palace, the Queen's consort lay down to die.

No sweeter days in the life of Anne are there than these during which she was less the Sovereign of Britain than the wife of the man she loved devotedly. For more than twenty years he had been her faithful companion, her simple, trusting friend, rather than her lord and counsellor. His highest wisdom was the law of self-preservation. To hold what they held was the boldest flight of his daring. England was doing right well when he was permitted to get on with his carpentry without distraction. Such natures, when marred by no repulsive traits, excite in woman a special tenderness, and to Anne her big helpless George was ever but a baby, on whom was lavished all that maternal affection in which no child was left to share.

Throughout his last long and painful illness he could not bear to be separated from her, and she was ever at his side. Close by was Masham, noiseless as a mouse, patiently awaiting every call, ready to faint with weariness rather than beg a respite from the silent watch she so faithfully kept.

The last illness of the Prince was seized upon

by the Whigs for the employment of a manœuvre so cruel as to be incredible, if the fact were not beyond dispute. We have seen how the Queen steadfastly refused to admit Lord Somers to the Cabinet, holding him to be largely responsible for the attacks made upon the mismanagement of naval affairs by the Prince and his colleagues at the Admiralty. These attacks had hitherto been directed mainly against Admiral Churchill, the Duke's brother. But when the Royal Lord High Admiral actually lay dying, the Whig chiefs threatened to assail him by name. The alternative was the admission of Somers to the Government.

To let the Prince know her dilemma would be to kill him. Bitter tears of helpless misery did the unhappy Sovereign shed. But what availed tears? Her father had wept; her stepmother; her brother; poor "La Consolatrice," too. Tears altered nothing, for men were wolves, and, moreover, why should she be spared? Oh, black, black irreparable sin thus for ever finding her out, piling tribulation on tribulation. Why did she not go mad? What she had done she would not do over again were Fate once more to test her. She had fallen through pride and ignorance, rather than through malice; and surely her punishment had already been atonement enough, or was she utterly condemned!

On earth at least there was no mercy for her. When she had wept in secret at the new torture imposed on her, there was nothing to be done but yield and admit Somers to her Government, and trust to the prudence of the Court to keep from the dying man the triumph of his enemies, and his Anne's defeat.

On Kensington Palace during the dreary days that were the vigil to the Queen's widowhood, the Duchess of Marlborough's thoughts were ever centred. Constantly she looked for a summons from her mistress, hoping that affliction would wipe out the memory of her transgression at St. Paul's. But no Royal message arrived at her door. From Godolphin and Sunderland she learned how the Royal patient sank day by day, but no word of forgiveness came to her through them from the Queen.

In her tantrums at St. Paul's she had told the Queen to hold her tongue; not to answer her. With maddening docility was she being obeyed.

The humiliation of being thus cast off without the least sign of regret by one who had so long fawned upon her became at length unendurable, when she learned that the Prince's hours were numbered. Straightway she hurried to Kensington, where already the Angel of

Death was greedily counting the minutes which George of Denmark might call his own.

Unannounced she entered the Prince's chamber, where by the bedside sat the disconsolate Queen.

The arrogance of this insuppressible tyrant in thus intruding into that sanctuary where the great human sacrifice was being offered up by the spectral priest, fired the spirit of the weeping wife.

As a Queen they might harass her, delude her, rob her, tempt her, flatter her, laugh at her, frighten her; but here she was a woman under the scourge of Heaven, taking leave of him whom they all thought a fool, but whom she loved with a mother's passionate tenderness. If she could not be allowed to receive the last cruel stripe in absolute privacy, at least let not her enemy look upon her in the abandonment of her grief, and cast a scornful eye upon the endearments with which she would receive the last breath from lips dear at least to her. In that instant, when the miracle of Death would be accomplished, she would be as a lover with her husband, alone with him save for the ghosts of their children.

The dying Prince saw the Queen and her fallen favourite confront each other a moment. Then the Queen uttered one word:

"Withdraw!"

Never had he seen her more the Sovereign. Was this his gentle, yielding Anne who dared to order thus the haughty Duchess? And was that really Sarah who slunk away into the shadows whither his failing eyes could not follow her?

But she did not withdraw. Her Royal mistress returned to the bedside of the dying man; and with feelings one does not care to analyse, the Mistress of the Robes, immovable in spite of the slight put upon her, watched the Royal lady's misery while her husband gasped his life away.

When the Prince was dead, Sarah, kneeling before the Sovereign, tried to be her consoler. Anne submitted with patience for a little time, for now she had no spirit left for contention. Perhaps indeed the sight of Death in all its majestic frigidity so subdued the Duchess as to lend some touch of humble sincerity to her condolences.

But it was only a moment ere the old truculent spirit blazed out afresh. Etiquette required that the Queen should depart from Kensington at once, and leave the Palace to the dead. First, however, Her Majesty desired to be alone for a few moments to compose herself. For this purpose she retired to her

From a photo by Emery Walker, after a picture in the National Portrait Gallery by Wissing.

PRINCE GEORGE OF DENMARK.

p. 512.

closet, at the same time commanding Sarah to send Masham to her. But whatever softness the Queen's grief had excited in Sarah, that command quickly turned her heart to stone. The name of Masham aroused the tigress within her. The smouldering fires of jealousy once again burst into flame. She would see the Queen dead before delivering her command to her rival! The Queen, benumbed with sorrow, listened for Masham's coming. But no footstep stirred in the gallery. She waited patiently; amongst them all they had at least taught her patience. Still no Masham. She was disobeyed in the first hours of her widowhood. And this was Majesty!

With him lying close by in his winding-sheet she would not have strife. Let them flout her! It was inevitable. And then, when she had dried her tears and obtained resignation that was perhaps half despair, she emerged from her closet and passed through the gallery lined with the members of the Royal Household, leaning on the arm of her arch-enemy. She drove through the autumnal evening in Sarah's carriage to St. James's Palace.

What mattered it now where she was or who was with her? Queen of England though she was, she was quite alone!

CHAPTER XXXV

"THE life of a slave in the galleys is Paradise in comparison with mine." It was in this spirit of abject despondency that the Lord Treasurer saw the dawn of the new year.

Godolphin's idea of governing with the help of both parties had failed, and he and Marlborough were now the only Tories of influence remaining in the Administration.

But though driven from office, the Tories were not altogether excluded from power. The Queen had now two sets of advisers. That which held the seals was utterly distasteful to her; the other stole to her on tiptoe by way of the back stairs. Of the council of the back stairs Robert Harley was Prime Minister, with Mrs. Masham Secretary of State.

Godolphin, to stave off ruin from day to day, had to adopt measures which made that ruin certain. He had coerced the Queen into making Somers Lord President, though he could not hope to maintain the direction of affairs for long against so able a rival supported by

a majority of ministers. Broken in spirit, but unable to reconcile himself to life free from the torments of power, Godolphin clung to office with the tenacity of an old man to whom change meant the end. As the days wore on, he took his place at a Council-board from which the face of every old friend was absent—unless, indeed, Marlborough, whose principles were as elastic as his own, could be accounted the friend of any man.

True to his religion of being ever on the winning side, Godolphin had coquetted with St. Germains when such coquetry promised any advantage. Marlborough had played the same double game. Now did both curse their folly, for the prospects of "the King over the water" looked black as night, and they were surrounded by enemies who would not spare them. The anxiety of the Lord Treasurer and the General was revealed in the steps they took to protect themselves from the consequences of their delinquencies. An Act of Grace was passed which pardoned all treasons committed in the past, and the impression amongst politicians was that the authors of the statute were those most deeply interested in the absolution it conferred. But no Act of Grace could ever entirely safeguard a Prime Minister against the wrath of a people who thought themselves betrayed. It

could not cause comprising documents to dissolve in the hands of his enemies. It could not save him from a storm of indignation which would hurl him from the heights where he had dwelt so long, into disgrace, were discovery to overtake him. His fears thus placed him in the dilemma from which he extricated himself only by conceding everything demanded by the junto.

According to the gossip of the day, the Earl of Wharton had obtained possession of a compromising letter to the Royal exiles which placed Godolphin in his power. Completely at the mercy of his opponents, the Lord Treasurer yielded everything to purchase his personal safety. Wharton was made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland instead of the Tory Earl of Pembroke, who was consoled with the post of Lord High Admiral. It was, however, but a temporary consolation. Pembroke was allowed to retain the office only until the autumn, when Godolphin, to please his Whig dictators, was obliged to remove him that another of the junto, Lord Orford, might enjoy the fruits of Wharton's strategy.

In this Government she hated, none was more repellent to Anne than Wharton. He had mortally wounded her tenderest susceptibilities by his advocacy of the project for inviting the Princess Sophia to England. The mention of her successor's name was like reading to the

Queen her death-warrant. But to have her cousin of Hanover as her near neighbour would be worse than life in a haunted chamber. Brought up in the strictest Puritanism, Wharton had the reputation in an age of rakes of being one of the greatest rakes in the kingdom. Had he cultivated any of the graces which, in the case of many of his contemporaries, glossed over such vices as his with a veneer of elegance and breeding, Anne might have pardoned his profligacy. But this noble, whose presence turned Her Majesty's thoughts towards an open tomb, and the funeral dirge swelling through the aisles of the Abbey, was more at home on the racecourse or at a cock-fight than as adviser to a Sovereign-Lady. And, strange consequence of his Puritan upbringing, so scant was his reverence for the Church the Queen loved, that he recommended a boon-companion for ecclesiastical preferment on the ground that his character was "practically flawless, but for his damnably bad manners," a eulogy portraying in a phrase the temperament of the noble Earl.

The new Ministry was in a sense what Wharton had made it. One of its members was, however, an exception, inasmuch as he was the reverse of disagreeable to the Queen. This was the Duke of Somerset, who, with all his exaggerated defects of character, cherished

some chivalrous regard for Anne, and was rewarded with unalterable esteem. Somerset was so entirely the opposite of Wharton that their meetings in Court and Cabinet must have been a continual festival of humour for the few who could relish the perfection of contrast. Wharton had no respect for his own rank, and in others accorded it little deference.

Somerset, on the contrary, was the embodiment of pride, that was a little pitiful and wholly ridiculous. His airs would have made a Prince of Wales the laughing-stock of the town. But if anybody laughed at Somerset he never knew, so carefully did he hedge round his dignity. His second wife once dared to tap him familiarly on the arm. Somerset reproved her gravely, and, to bring home to her the extravagance of such a liberty, held up the example of her predecessor, who, though a Percy, had never so presumed on the privileges of her position.

They say that when staying in the country, outriders preceded his Grace's carriage to clear the road of common folk, lest their curiosity should ruffle the great man. One day the advance-guard encountered a yokel of spirit enjoying, in the companionship of his pig, the freedom of the Queen's highway.

"Out of the way!" cried the lackey.

From an engraving by W. Holl, after a painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

CHARLES SEYMOUR, DUKE OF SOMERSET.
("THE PROUD DUKE.")

p. 548.

"Why?" inquired the stolid rustic.

"My Lord Duke is coming, and he does not like to be looked at," snapped the horseman, enraged at the fellow's impudence.

"But I will see him, and my pig will see him too!" retaliated the mettlesome countryman; and, as good as his word, he held aloft the animal by the ears while the ducal equipage and retinue galloped past to the music with which it rent the ears of the horrified Somerset.

However unpleasing the Duke's politics might be to Anne, however vexatious his lofty airs, he had proved in days gone by his friendship when a friend she sorely needed; and now he was not the less acceptable to her because he was at bitter enmity with Marlborough and Godolphin.

During the recent changes Somerset had strongly supported Marlborough and the Lord Treasurer. He had likewise helped to get rid of Harley. In the redistribution of offices he had anticipated a reward befitting his services. But he still remained Master of the Horse, an ornamental minor official, and nothing more, while the junto and their friends appropriated all the great administrative posts. This neglect drove him into the arms of Harley, who was, therefore, not without an ally in the legitimate Council of the Sovereign. Neither in the cabinet of the backstairs nor in that of the

Cockpit was there, however, any difference of opinion as to Somerset's capacity as a statesman. Both parties held him in contempt, yet Somerset's was the policy which triumphed in the long run—a policy from which he never swerved.

The men of genius fell one by one. They trimmed, intrigued, they stooped to treason, and traded on loyalty, as occasion required, but for the "proud Duke" only one set of opinions existed in religion and politics; and with a heart above fear, and intellect impervious to argument, he did more, perhaps, than all the great men who despised him to assure the ultimate success of his party.

The changes in the English Ministry caused dismay at Versailles. The war-party in England received their new lease of power at a time when Nature herself had joined the Imperial alliance. The winter had been felt with intense severity throughout France. The feet of the cattle froze to the earth. The ice lay along the sea-shore in glistening banks, like dunes turned to silver, where the tide was captured and crystallised by the arctic frost. Orchards, olive-groves, and vineyards, blighted by the withering blasts as though swept by invisible fire, stretched their arms, naked and dead, to the frigid sky, arms which would never again don garb of green. With his land in plight so grievous,

Louis had once more made overtures for peace at The Hague.

Never was king more willing to give all that was his to give to assuage the miseries of his subjects. No longer pretender to illimitable empire, it was a chastened monarch who now, almost cap in hand, sought to end the war.

The man chosen by Louis to open on behalf of France the peace negotiations was Pierre Rouillé, Seigneur de Marbœuf, who in the early stages of the war had been the victim of one of those clerical aberrations which occasionally throw the gravest affairs into irreparable confusion. Rouillé had been sent as ambassador to Portugal in 1697. The goodwill of Lisbon was at the time a prize diligently competed for, but the new ambassador was so far successful that Portugal acquiesced in the arrangement whereby a Bourbon prince was to succeed Charles II. of Spain. When, on the death of Charles, Louis found the Imperial coalition arrayed against him, Rouillé was instructed to draw Portugal into an alliance with France. But England and Holland, alarmed at a project which if realised would confer enormous advantages upon France, made extraordinary efforts to checkmate the wise Seigneur de Marbœuf. In the end he was defeated, but his discomfiture was due to a clerk in Paris and not to the superior skill of his diplomatic adver-

saries. Pierre II. of Portugal, hardpressed by the opposing embassies, hesitated before finally committing himself to a course which, however he chose, might be the ruin of his country. His seaboard was open to the navies of England and Holland, while not only the seaboard, but the eastern frontier as well, would be at the mercy of France were a grandson of Louis established at Madrid. In a situation hedged round with dangers, the King would gladly have considered a plan for excluding his country from the theatre of war. Louis XIV. therefore agreed to accord Pierre a treaty of neutrality. But by a rare stroke of ill-fortune, the despatch embodying this important modification of policy was addressed to the French Ambassador at Madrid, Cardinal D'Estrées. His eminence, ignorant that the fate of nations depended upon the speed with which that packet reached Rouillé's hands at Lisbon, returned it to Paris. When at length the plenary powers he had so impatiently awaited were placed in his hands, it was already too late. During the inaction forced upon him by the absence of instructions, his rivals had captured the friendship of Portugal, and French diplomacy had suffered a rebuff which was to affect to this day continental alliances.

From this transaction one might infer that Rouillé, despite his wisdom and knowledge, was

deficient in resource and initiative. But with such a master as Louis initiative was a quality apt to conduct a statesman to private life. It was this wary diplomatist who was ordered to Holland to make secret overtures for peace. Moerdyke was appointed by the States General of the United Provinces as the theatre of the negotiations, and thither, to confer with the French envoy, repaired Monsieur Buys, the Pensionary of Amsterdam, and Monsieur Vander Dussen, the Pensionary of Gouda.

The Dutch conducted themselves with more than usual shrewdness, and without effusive hospitality towards their French guests. When they had heard him at Moerdyke, he was favoured with an invitation to Woerden, as being more convenient for the further negotiations. Meanwhile the Emperor was informed of what was afoot, and to the Court of Anne also came the news that Louis was making peaceful advances.

Anne heard the tidings with deep relief, tinged with anxiety lest, despite his bankrupt Treasury and the sufferings of his people, such terms might nevertheless be insisted upon by her ministers as would force Louis into a last despairing effort to retrieve his fortunes in the field. Marlborough, invested with the fullest powers, proceeded to Holland, and found there his old comrade Prince Eugene, representing the Emperor.

Rouillé had seen great advantages lost to his country through such a trifle as the misdirection of a despatch. That trifle enshrined a whole system of philosophy which the wise Frenchman had doubtless assimilated. If he had emerged from the discipline half-stoic, half-fatalist, so much the better. It needed the inflexible courage of the one and the indifference of the other to argue his master's case with spirit and confidence at a board where the issue depended upon Marlborough and Prince Eugene. And of the two, perhaps the Imperial envoy, swarthy and scowling, was the one whom Rouillé prayed most fervently the devil might fly away with; for Marlborough had his weak side, but Eugene had a personal grudge to avenge, and what could an Ambassador offer a proud soldier which would heal a wound to his pride which had been rankling and festering for years?

The soldier from Vienna, more than any of his colleagues at the conference table, save perhaps Marlborough, held in his hands the fate of France; and when he was but a youth the King of France had dealt him the heaviest blow which can perhaps visit the neophyte at the threshold of life, for Eugene had been thwarted in his earliest ambitions by His Most Christian Majesty.

There were sentimental reasons why Eugene,

as a lad, might have thought the favour of Louis assured him. These reasons were associated with the romance of the King's youth. For his aunt, Marie Mancini, the King, as has been seen, had cherished a tenderness that for a time filled the girl's head with visions of a Crown. But Louis let her be torn from him—"*Vous pleurez, vous êtes roi, et je pars*," said Marie, stung to reproach when politics vanquished love, and her dream of sharing the Throne of France was dispelled. Marie's sister, Olympia Mancini, was Eugene's mother. As Countess de Soissons she was for long one of the favourites of Louis. But the lady managed to acquire the reputation of being a poisoner, which was perhaps her misfortune rather than her fault. In time she was obliged to fly from France, and reduced well-nigh to beggary; but Eugene, still a boy, was given a pension to enable him to maintain his rank. When, however, he demanded a commission in the French service the King rebuffed him, and Eugene left the country, vowing he would never enter it again except at the head of a conquering army. And he kept his word; though, luckily for Louis and Maintenon, whom he hated, he never penetrated to Paris, thanks to the English. What Louis so lightly and so blindly lost the Emperor gained, for Eugene, though intended for the priesthood,

no sooner was given the chance than he established a claim to be regarded as one of the greatest generals of the day. And now the "Abbé de Carignan," as Eugene was called in his early days, was a judge upon the tribunal before which Louis sued for peace, a judge who had not only his own grievances but those of mother and aunt to repay.

One, too, who had some personal reason to desire the humiliation of France joined the conferences. This was the Grand Pensionary, Anthony Heinsius, the trusty friend who had co-operated in all King William's schemes, who had indeed made them possible. Heinsius had tasted of the contempt with which France in the hey-day of prosperity regarded the sturdy citizens of his Republic. William had sent him to Paris after the treaty of Nimeguen in 1678 to conduct some negotiations on his behalf. The Marquis de Louvois, who had directed with consummate ability the events leading up to the treaty, then stood high in the favour of Louis. All power was, indeed, for the time being in his hands. Heinsius addressed the arrogant noble without measuring his words, and was threatened with the Bastille for his frankness. Heinsius was not likely to forget that threat, so scornful of the rights, so ungenerous to the weakness of his country. After thirty years the chance for

retaliation had come. Louvois was dead, but here was Rouillé!

From French sources comes the story that Rouillé implored of Marlborough to confer on his beloved country the boon of peace, and to pocket at the same time two millions of livres. Marlborough did not seem complaisant. He was dissatisfied, either on account of his country or at the poverty of his own recompense. The French bid was advanced to five millions, and the negotiations then began to move more briskly. It was to the interests of the French envoy to delay the conclusion of a peace which could, under no circumstances, be favourable to his country. But it was his business to advance the negotiations to such a stage as to obtain an early suspension of hostilities.

While the peace conferences, impeded by the exhausted state of the French Treasury, which rendered it easier for Rouillé to promise than to perform, made but tardy progress, Marlborough received an alarming letter from England. It informed him—

"That the price at which he had agreed for the peace had transpired; that his private contract with the Minister of France had been sinistrously explained to the Queen, that a serious altercation had then ensued between Her Majesty and his Duchess, which had ended in an

open rupture; that his enemies were busily at work, and that his presence alone could impede the progress of a sudden and total change of the Administration.

Marlborough immediately sought an interview with Rouillé and reproached him with indiscretion. The French Minister was overwhelmed. Peace was the one thing in all the world for which his country pleaded. Wither the tongue which had baffled its hopes! But the tongue was not his. The dark secret is said to have come to light through the agency of Harley, the wily Defoe perhaps helping to design the trap which exposed the Duke as trader in the blood of the nations.

Harley, it is said, contrived to have Marlborough watched throughout the negotiations in Holland, and managed to obtain a hint of the secret compact which Rouillé had proposed. Harley, through his devoted Secretary of State, Mrs. Masham, caused a whisper of the affair to reach the Queen. Anne's indignation could not be concealed. So calm in face of incessant annoyances, Her Majesty's self-control gave way on hearing that Marlborough was engaged in driving a bargain for himself, while Sovereign and people waited in an agony of doubt for the boon so inestimably precious.

The Queen betrayed to the Duchess her

displeasure with a degree of frankness which astonished the fallen idol. It alarmed as well as astonished her, for Harley confided his discovery to the Duke of Hamilton and the Earl of Rochester, the enemies of all others whom Sarah most dreaded—enemies who, if they could but obtain irrefutable evidence of her husband's guilt, would glory in accomplishing his ruin.

The fate of the Ministry hung, indeed, by a thread when Marlborough arrived from Holland. But Marlborough could not be thus easily crushed, at least, not by such a Queen. William of Orange would have sent him to the Tower. But William was a strong man, confident in his own judgment, right or wrong, glorying as much in the conflict of politics as of war, while Anne desired peace so much that it was ever her way to create for herself a harvest of future trouble by evading present strife. The hour had come to strike down Marlborough, to consign the soldier to a soldier's proper place. But Anne did not dare to speak the word, and Rochester, Hamilton, Harley and the rest of her secret advisers seem to have sympathised with her fears rather than to have spurred her to action.

Nor was their hesitation unjustified. The country was drunk with victory. The all-conquering Duke had an army of friends in high places, and a still vaster army of admirers

amongst the ignorant populace. To destroy so great, so successful a man as Marlborough it seemed necessary to let him destroy himself. Anne, therefore, yielded to the blandishments and threats of ministers and the general. What did she know of the crooked ways of diplomacy? If in France they coined stories of Marlborough's cupidity, of his readiness to make peace for gold, and to make war if his price were not forthcoming, it was surely to the interest of France to ruin the general who had brought her legions to the dust. Such plausible arguments are never wanting to support the weakest cause when its advocates are men of genius; not that Marlborough's colleagues must be regarded as his companions in corruption. But politics establish strange alliances, none stranger than that of the purchased and the unpurchasable.

Marlborough, when hastening home from Holland, had left behind him the sinister assurance that a hundred and twenty thousand men would treat of peace on French soil during the coming summer. And that the English general's meaning might not be left in doubt, Rouillé was informed that his master's proposals were unacceptable. Whatever slender hope Louis had cherished of drawing Holland into a separate peace vanished on news reaching Versailles of the course of events in Holland.

The Empire was implacable. England was a stronghold of his enemies. But any breathing-space was welcome, so desperate was the plight of France. Even weeks had become golden, and to obtain them the Marquis de Torcy, nephew of the great Colbert, volunteered to go to Holland to defend the terms proposed by his Sovereign.

Marlborough's visit to England was a brief one. Within ten days the political crisis was past. The Whig barque had ridden safely through the tempest, and the Duke returned to Holland accompanied by Charles, the second Viscount Townshend, where he found de Torcy had already arrived and submitted to Heinsius the French proposals. Louis was ready to give everything that was his to give. He did not confess the armies of France beaten. But they had had their fill of fighting, and since he could not dictate terms to the enemies, he would not descend to haggle with them. De Torcy's diplomacy was worthy of the Grand Monarque. At the first meeting he flung all the cards upon the table. France agreed to yield the whole Spanish monarchy to the House of Austria without an equivalent ; to restore her conquests on the Empire, to yield up a number of strong places for a barrier to Holland ; to acknowledge the Elector of Brandenburg as

King of Prussia; the Duke of Hanover as ninth Elector of the Empire, to return everything he had lost to the Duke of Savoy, and to recognise the cessions made by the confederates to the King of Portugal. But this was not all. Louis agreed to do penance for his generosity in establishing a "King James the Third of England" at St. Germains. Just as he had to admit at Ryswick the stern fact that William had supplanted James II., so now he was prepared to own as British Queen the choice of the British Parliament against the Prince of his own nomination.

De Torcy discerned in Marlborough the arbiter of all their destinies. With the utmost address he played his part. But ordinary weapons were of no avail in this enterprise. The Frenchman's charm of manner, his versatility, his wit, his reasonableness, were employed against one who possessed no less charm, and who was a very slave to sweet reasonableness. The argument of the well-filled purse, so eloquently introduced by Rouillé, is heard of no more during the negotiations. Marlborough had, perhaps, learned caution, and felt bound to vindicate his honour at the expense of the tempter.

The conferences had scarcely opened at The Hague when de Torcy, at a loss to understand the disposition of his opponents, asked for his

passports. They were readily granted. He thus learned that the allies were at least in earnest in the extravagance of their demands. Putting the best face he could upon his surrender, he returned them and reported to Versailles, asking for further instructions. But it was all a game of make-believe. Perhaps the Dutch in their simplicity really thought the hour had come when France would fall to rise no more, and the restless foe, so long a scourge, lie tamed, with one anxious eye constantly fixed on the Empire, ever ready to tremble at a word from Vienna. Heinsius drew up a number of preliminary articles to a general peace. France would readily have submitted to all save one; and that one it was not perhaps intended that she should accept. It required that Louis should join with the allies in expelling his grandson from the Peninsula; that French arms should undo what they had so valiantly done.

Louis had said to young Philip: "There are no longer Pyrenees." Now, however, the Spanish King reminded his grandsire that the mountains had once again reared their heights between their kingdoms, and that behind their ramparts he would fight to the last for his Crown. Philip caused his little son Louis, Prince of the Asturias, to be solemnly acknowledged as his heir by the deputies of the Spanish provinces.

And to the Prince's great-grandfather he wrote that—

"He neither repined at, nor found fault with, His Most Christian Majesty's thoughts of abandoning him, considering the present condition of his affairs, and he would never forget the obligations His Majesty had laid upon him in making his utmost efforts to settle and maintain him on the Throne of Spain. But he desired His Majesty not to stipulate anything concerning him in any treaty, being firmly resolved, as long as there remained one Spaniard faithful to him, rather to perish than relinquish a monarchy to which he had so good a title. And that if ill-fortune should ever reduce him to the necessity of leaving Spain, he would retire either to Peru or Mexico, whence his enemies would find it no easy matter to expel him."

De Torcy retired from The Hague to discuss the proposed treaty with Louis. On June 2 the Marquis and his master met at Versailles to decide a question as grave as had ever arisen for France throughout her chequered history. Their companion in the Council would be Chamillard, very honest, very dull, watching the King, watching de Torcy. Perhaps in that fateful discussion Madame de Maintenon had some voice. The fair promise of new-born June, so fresh and green beneath blue skies, invited them to yield everything, and everything they were ready to yield. But here it was a

question of exchanging one war for another. The terms of peace were not terms of peace at all, but a mortgage upon the very independence of the kingdom.

When France had to choose between fighting against a French prince or for him, there could be no doubt as to her choice. Louis himself had sent the Dauphin's son with a blessing to Madrid. The Prince had risen to his destiny; and was France to turn renegade at the last and overthrow this monarch of her own creation? Was she to compound with a foreigner only to engage in fratricidal strife? Louis' spirit revolted at the notion of such perfidy. Not a prince, not a soldier, not a beggar in France would hear of it. The war, therefore, should go on; and more than ever it seemed that France and England would bequeath it as a legacy to succeeding generations.

Marlborough's enemies charge him with impeding the arrangement of peace. His friends contend that he desired it above everything. Whatever the disposition of the victorious general, he was most anxious at this time to establish his own fortunes on a pedestal so splendid that from further victories he would have little to gain, while the conclusion of peace could hardly eclipse his glory. He desired to be made Captain-General of the forces for life.

The Queen evaded this presumptuous request with remarkable adroitness. Her Majesty invited Lord Chancellor Cowper to advise her as to the terms in which he would prepare such a commission.

Cowper did not attempt to conceal his amazement at this naïve proposal. This sturdy Whig had no intention of allowing England to be placed in the power of a military dictator, above all of a dictator of the type of Marlborough, the depth of whose ambition no man had ever plumbed. Cowper derided the notion, while the Queen no doubt disguised her delight with an affectation of studious interest in his lordship's learned homily. "Talk to the Duke of Marlborough about it," said Her Majesty. The tact with which the Duke's scheme was defeated may perhaps be justly credited to Harley.

The little comedy was managed with a precision and ease that bespoke the master-hand in the deft manipulation of threads of intrigue, the arch-schemer who, apparently indifferent, lures his adversary into winning for him his game. But Marlborough did not deem the coveted patent lost beyond all hope. He regarded his defeat as but a check, to be repaired later when the enemy, according to the laws of war, should pay with compound interest for his disappointment.

CHAPTER XXXVI

ON the heath of Malplaquet September 11, 1709, the Imperialists under Marlborough and Eugene met the French under Villars. Through all the long train of disasters Villars had preserved his reputation. It was now the hope of his country. With the redoubtable Marlborough and Eugene as his antagonists, would he emerge from the ordeal with undiminished renown? That was the question which they asked themselves at Versailles, asked in fear and trembling. The history of that memorable day of battle records no achievement of generalship, no flash of military genius. It is a story of valour and bloodshed. The French flung themselves to death with invincible spirit. In their ranks were the Irish, driven by oppression from Innisfail. It was for them the hour of vengeance, and, once aroused, a prairie fire might be as easily checked.

To kindle the flame, James Stuart, to them no Pretender, but their king, for whose father their fathers had fought, rode with the marshal.

But the English and their allies were not outmatched in gallantry. Princes of the blood and troopers of many a land, in the thick of one of the bloodiest battles of history, all were equal, all were heroes. Did an aide-de-camp seek a general? Then should he spur to where the musketry fire was hottest, and dead men and horses lay piled in ghastly ramparts. Prince Eugene was wounded, Villars was wounded, but Marlborough, ever the darling of the gods, scatheless led the charge at the head of the cavalry —a true knight, a hero, a king indeed in the field, effacing his sins in the glory of a fight, where he courted the absolution of blood with his heart naked to the enemy. When the sun went down over the plain, close upon forty thousand dead men lay beneath the pall of night. The battle was claimed by the allies, but their losses were nearly twice as great as those of the French, whose commander wrote to his king: "If God in His goodness should vouchsafe to us such another battle, your Majesty may consider your enemies annihilated."

A victory, in which more than twenty thousand Englishmen and their friends had fallen, was a victory too much. Marlborough had drawn the sword once too often. Malplaquet was a warning that the gods had decked him with his meed of laurels. London might affect to rejoice, but

the homes of gentle and simple were hung with mourning. England had had her fill of victory, and men began to ask themselves, what had it all availed, beyond making one man a Duke and a Prince, master of vast wealth and of a Royal domain?

Malplaquet gave the Tories and their friends new courage, and one of their spokesmen made London ring with his tirades against the Ministry. It was Henry Sacheverell who, throwing discretion to the winds, was enlisted by fate to be the blind instrument of the destruction of the junto. Sacheverell, a High-Church clergyman, held the benefice of St. Saviour's, Southwark. As a preacher his reverence would have delighted Charles I. James II. would have thought him a fellow of some discernment. The pulpit at St. Saviour's was the last stronghold of the principle of "Divine Right.' Sacheverell had not to complain of empty benches. The public of Anne's day were not all bitter Whigs and fanatical Tories. A party larger than either went there merely for entertainment. Sacheverell supplied it by trying to revive that fashion in political thought which the Revolution of 1688 was supposed to have finally extinguished. The doctrines of "passive obedience" and "Divine Right" were illuminated by Sacheverell with scornful illusions at the expense of his rulers.

Godolphin was the special object of his aversion. Volpone, or the Old Fox, was, it seems, a nickname in which the town epitomised the qualities which had made and maintained the Lord Treasurer's fortune. At any rate, the epithet Volpone rang from the pulpit, and the town at once identified the object of attack. A sermon in his favourite strain, preached before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen at St. Paul's, completed Sacheverell's notoriety, and in the opinion of his admirers sealed his fame. The Lord Mayor was enchanted, as became an ardent Tory, and the apostle had his sermon published, that a wider public might relish his discourse and extend his popularity.

The pulpit was privileged. Not so the press, and the publication of the sermon placed the clergyman within the reach of the law. The crafty Godolphin, crafty no longer, deigned to notice the denunciations of Sacheverell. His sermons were, of course, the delight of the Tory high-flyers, and the diversion of the cynical. But nations do not repent of revolutions without better reason than the bidding of a parish clergyman. Even he, however, may work wonders, if his enemies are foolish enough to begin weaving for him a martyr's garland.

This was the course which recommended itself to the usually moderate Godolphin. The "galley-

slave" had lost his sense of proportion. Old Fox no longer, he would be the Lion. He felt somehow like a man who had strayed amongst quicksands, and who, without well knowing what to do, dare not keep still, while in moving he only hastened his destruction. The headstrong Sunderland assumed the lead in the march to ruin. He contended for the impeachment of Sacheverell. "Why convert empty words into an affair of State?" argued Somers. "If a prosecution there must be, then let the ordinary law take its course." This wise advice was overruled. The Ministry was mad, and calling its madness strength, it rushed on its fate.

Anne was struck at indirectly by Sacheverell's doctrine. Compared with hers the perfidy of Godolphin was venial. Sunderland, Orford, Somerset, Somers, Newcastle, Wharton, Cowper, they were every one of the true Cromwellian breed, and if they had not sacrificed their king it was because His Majesty had fled from the altar. But Anne, more powerful than they, had pursued him over the sea, and had broken his heart. Sacheverell was, however, politic enough to set the Queen above his teaching. He preferred no request that she should send her Crown to St. Germains. She was the Queen! Long live the Queen!

Had he shown Her Majesty less deference she

could nevertheless have pardoned him. The Marlborough clique hated him, they panted for vengeance, therefore should the Queen extend to him a measure of sympathy. This was not a logical frame of mind, but the heart is above logic ; and in this instance it attracted Anne to the man who would preach her brother on to the Throne, rather than to the men who had driven her father from it.

The insolence of the Duchess of Marlborough towards Anne was no Court secret to be gossipped over by a discreet inner circle. The whole town knew of the Queen's servitude. While the Court was at Windsor that autumn, Sarah had forced on the Queen a quarrel which was, in a sense, another Malplaquet, for if the Mistress of the Robes had her way, the victory was in its consequences for her more costly than a defeat. The Queen had allowed a sick servant a bottle of wine. It was this violation of the rights of the Churchills which raised the storm. Her Majesty tried to escape from the torrent of wrath. But Sarah was an adept in tactics, as well as her husband. She stood with her back to the door, and her Mistress should listen !

The beautiful termagant, never more beautiful than in her tantrums, raved and railed. One can peep through the Castle window, where the

autumn sunbeams enter to make sport around her. They meet the fire flashed from those eyes that never quailed, and pale and fade. Hear her voice ringing out through the casement. The birds cease to whistle and raise their heads to listen to the cascade thrilling with devilry. The most boisterous singer of them all knows not in what notes to respond to that music.

The courtiers, the ladies, the lackeys, the maids, must have heard the shrill voice echoing like some mad alarm-bell through the old Castle. Shades of the Queens of England must have heard it, and the good ones were sorry for poor Anne, while the spiteful had a treat to their fancy.

Anne was for the time being a captive. While the furious Duchess stood with her back to the door there was no escape, and Sarah was in no hurry to quit so commanding a position. She had much to say, and she said it all, for to the duration of this audience it was her privilege to set the limit. A picture of distressed matronhood stood the Queen, wondering what the end would be and when it would come. Her sombre attire recalled her bereavement of a twelvemonth ago; but Sarah was without mercy, and not a taunt would she spare the desolate lady. Why did not Mrs. Danvers, the lady-in-waiting, come to the rescue? Was she deaf? Or was

she only prudent, that chiefest virtue in a Queen's antechamber?

As Sarah gesticulated in harmony with the violence of her harangue, one can imagine Anne growing nervous lest ruder treatment was in store for her dignity. She could not remember any Queen regnant whose ears had been boxed by a Mistress of the Robes, but Sarah was not a dame to curb herself for want of a precedent. Anne was no coward, but she was resolved that in future there would be two doors, one for each. One can fancy her wondering if the climax would be a wild chase round chairs and tables, with sad consequences for a Queen with the gout. Or perhaps there would be no chase at all, only a final volley, in which the silver candlesticks would be sent flying at the Sovereign's head! But Anne need have had no such fears. In Sarah's wildest outbreaks she retained some vestige of shrewdness.

The virago did not want to offend the Queen beyond repair, but rather to regain the dominion fast slipping from her for ever. For a full hour the tirade lasted. Then Sarah, having exhausted herself, clinched her folly with a thrust that once would have wounded Her Majesty, but now passed her harmlessly by:

"I don't care if I never see your Majesty again!" said Sarah.

The retort thus invited tripped off Anne's lips before giving herself time to reflect that it might cost her another hour of torment.

"The seldomer the better!" said Anne; and seldom it was afterwards.

The trial of Sacheverell came at a period, therefore, when confusion reigned in Court and politics. A certain naïve courage that was half feminine curiosity often marked Anne's interference in public affairs. Frequently during her reign, when party passion ran high, she followed the example of Charles II., and attended the debates in the Lords. Charles went for amusement. Anne flattered herself that her purpose was more serious, but it was her way to take her diversions rather seriously. The impeachment of this audacious Sacheverell was too good a play to be missed. The masques at Whitehall in the days of Charles were nothing to it.

As she was carried to Westminster Hall in her sedan-chair to witness the trial, the people crowded round with the salutation, "God bless your Majesty. . . . We hope you are for Dr. Sacheverell." Her Majesty was, and they guessed it.

On February 27, 1710, the trial opened. From the curtained box fitted up for her, the Queen watched the proceedings. Accompanying Her Majesty were the Duchess of Marlborough,

Lady Hyde, Lady Burlington, and Lady Scarborough. Etiquette required that the ladies should stand until commanded by the Queen to sit. Never was mistress more thoughtful to all in her service than Anne. She would not have a laundress fatigued if she could spare her. But to-day she was strangely absorbed. The minutes sped past. The ladies grew tired, yet no command to be seated. Was the Queen dreaming? The minutes became a quarter of an hour. They rested on one foot, on another, on both, and then repeated the weary process over again and again, until they thought they should drop of exhaustion.

Had the Queen, like the mob, gone mad about Sacheverell? Might he be sent to the block at a single sitting for mesmerising their mistress! . . . The quarters lengthened into half-hours and hours, until at length the Duchess of Marlborough could stand no longer. She begged permission to sit, which was at once given to all the ladies. Lady Hyde, however, insisted on standing behind the Queen's chair, as did the Duchess of Somerset on the following day. Both ladies in this way aired their loyalty at Sarah's expense. For they doubtless guessed that the Queen's apparent forgetfulness in the first instance was but a sly hint to Her Grace that though she should stand in Her Majesty's

presence, she should not do so with her back to the door without the Royal command.

If the Queen's sympathy was with Sacheverell, so, indeed, was that of most of the ladies in London. His energy and courage in the pulpit had charmed them. And now that his martyrdom was at hand they canonised him. Those of the fair who had never seen him heard from the lips of their friends glowing pictures of his comeliness, and the pavement-traders of the capital did a brisk sale in prints intended to be equally flattering to the reverend hero.

Lest the trial at Westminster Hall should be regarded by the mob as an ordeal more theatrical than hazardous, prayers were offered up in many of the churches for "the deliverance of a brother under persecution, from the hands of his enemies." The rougher section of Sacheverell's admirers took the supplication literally. They would themselves be the instruments of Divine interposition on behalf of their idol. The trial, therefore, had been in progress only a day or two when popular excitement promised to find vent in a serious rising. As Sacheverell drove to Westminster Hall the cry was, "Hats off!" Woe betide those who would not thus do homage to the parson who had captivated the fancy of the multitude. Amongst the victims were some members of Parliament, who thus

learned a sharp lesson in the refinements of popular veneration.

It was in the evening, however, when the Court had adjourned, and the accused clergyman, who was on bail, had been escorted to his home amidst a continuous storm of applause, that sport began in grim earnest. It was necessary to batter and burn in honour of "High Church and Dr. Sacheverell." And where could there be found materials better adapted to the requirements of the occasion than in the meeting-houses of the Dissenters?

Forward, crusaders, to Lincoln's Inn Fields! A meeting-house with all its timbers providentially dry for this night's work will be found there. And if a noble bonfire a couple of miles away, fed by one's friends, can warm the heart of a persecuted priest, and soothe his pillow, then must Sacheverell rest happy as a child. A thousand eager hands helped to dismantle the chapel; and pulpit, pews, wainscot, hymnals, and hassocks—everything, in fact, that would burn, was sent flying into the fields and set alight. Then, while the mob howled its delight before this pure and inexpensive holocaust, it was, "High Church and Sacheverell! High Church and Sacheverell!" until ashes alone remained on the altar.

This was only an incident of the general

tumult. From Long Acre to Shoe Lane, from Blackfriars to Clerkenwell, similar scenes of violence were enacted. These outrages upon unoffending Dissenters the Government might perhaps suffer with composure. It was, however, different when infuriated mobs surged round the houses of the Lord Chancellor and Wharton, threatening to level the walls round the ears of the noble owners.

Sunderland, alarmed lest this commotion was the first symptom of a plot against the Government, flew to the Queen. The Tower, the Bank were at the mercy of the howling populace. The Queen took fright. She liked Sacheverell, for he was a good-looking fellow, with courage and agreeable opinions. His enemies said that when he professed allegiance to the Queen he meant the Pretender. Anne, however, knew better; so did his enemies.

But with the yells of lawless rascals ringing in the street, while the City was overcast with the smoke from the fires kindled by their ignorant wrath, she had no mind to spare them for the sake of their idol. Sunderland may have whispered to Her Majesty that there were amongst the rioters persons of quality in disguise. That it was so was the common gossip of the town. A hint of the kind was enough to make the Queen turn pale, for only a lead

was wanted from some of the great families to end the war against France in the horrors of civil war.

It was within an hour of midnight when Sunderland emerged from St. James's Palace, leaving the widowed Queen to her reflections and to Masham. She had given his lordship orders to call out her guards, horse and foot, and restore order. But what if the rabble should march to the Palace and find it unguarded? Sunderland, with unwonted chivalry, reminded Her Majesty of the risk she incurred by leaving the Palace unprotected. She could dispense, however, with his lordship's solicitude. While he dared he had made her life a continual torment. Now he had more reason to fear for himself than for her. "God," answered Her Majesty with dignity, "will be my guard."

Away hastened Sunderland across the Park to the Cockpit. Happily his lonely path lay far from the track of the rioters. For it would not have been well for Charles Spencer had he found himself that March night in the hands of the rabble. Late as was the hour, a Council was in progress at the Cockpit, at which Sunderland was expected with the Queen's commands.

When he had delivered these, Captain Horsey, the commandant of the bodyguard, was called in and ordered to disperse the rioters. Horsey

From an engraving.

CHARLES, EARL OF SUNDERLAND.

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betrayed some uneasiness about leaving his Royal mistress under such unusual circumstances; but whether his doubts were concerning ministers or the mob may not be easily conjectured. The Lord Chancellor represented to the captain that delays were dangerous, that while he debated London was in the hands of the rabble, who wanted but slight temptation to sack the houses of distinguished servants of Her Majesty. Still Horsey would not order out his men without instructions in writing.

"You will have them in the morning!" said Sunderland, "upon my honour."

Then the anxious soldier wished to know if he was to fight or preach to the mob. As for the former it was his trade and he would do his best; but as to the latter, he was an indifferent orator and they would do well to lend him the company of a better speaker. If the Captain meant that Sunderland himself, or another of the Whig nobles, would be a useful mouthpiece at the head of the bodyguard, the hint was ignored. And with an injunction to use his judgment and abstain from violence, except in case of necessity, the Captain of the Queen's Guards retired to march his troops against the townspeople.

The first encounter was a droll one, and very reassuring to Horsey, who had no ambition for laurels won in a street fight at a time when a

street fight might be the preliminary to revolution, and Heaven alone knew what tribunal would exact retribution for every broken head. At Drury Lane the soldiers came up with the van of the rioters. The ringleader of the latter was George Purchase, an ex-trooper of the Life-guards.

"Damn ye," he cried to his old comrades, "who are you for—High Church, Low Church, or Dr. Sacheverell?"

In broad daylight the troops might have laughed at the bold George, who had lost his saddle for some misdemeanour. But at that hour they were too weary to relish the comedy. To the devil with High and Low Church—and to the guard-house with the infernal Purchase.

"Come on, boys! come on," cried George to the brigade of tatterdemalions behind, as, setting them the example, he dashed forward with drawn sword. But this was different sport from burning meeting-houses, and the mob ran away, leaving their chief in the hands of the yawning warriors. From Drury Lane, Horsey marched his men east, and at Fleet Ditch the mob made a stand while sabres were fleshed and prisoners taken to keep the valiant Purchase company.

For the defenceless Queen that night was one of the longest and most anxious of her life. For her defeated ministers it was one of gloomy

apprehensions, for surely this was the first rumblings of a storm which would overwhelm them. In the morning the trained bands were called out, and during the remainder of Sacheverell's trial London was a city under arms.

Westminster Hall is the proper home of national drama, of national tragedy. Ministers had unwittingly made it the theatre of a farce. And the laughter it aroused was their death-knell. Sacheverell was sentenced to suspension for three years by a majority of six. But the motion that he should be excluded from preferment in the Church during that time was lost by one vote. This, then, was how Parliament resented the insult levelled against Godolphin. No wonder the town laughed. It was as though Parliament, while affecting to punish Sacheverell, had joined in the cry of "Old Fox."

Had Sacheverell been severely punished there would almost certainly have been a popular outbreak which would have obtained for the Government widespread support. But his release satisfied the populace, while it relieved the upper classes from the fear of a tumult which could only be suppressed by maintaining the established authority. Had there been a rising, every Whig in the land would have stood by the Government. But there was no question of fighting. It was an affair of

laughter, and every Whig who was tired of the Marlborough yoke joined as heartily as any Tory in the mirth.

It was not only in London that Sacheverell was a popular hero. While yet his trial was in progress, Sir Simon Harcourt, his brilliant advocate, was elected to Parliament for Cardigan. Westwards, too, Sacheverell turned when he was free to leave London. A Prince of the Blood might have envied the attentions showered upon the suspended clergyman. The people acclaimed him as the spotless victim of tyranny, with a patriot's heart beating under the cassock he adorned. Mayors and Corporations waited upon him and humbly begged him to accept their hospitality. Magistrates descended from their pedestals to do the great man honour.

The Ministry, in a fit of bootless rage at the ridiculous plight in which they had landed themselves, plunged still deeper into the morass. Sunderland once more took the lead. He wrote to the aged Earl of Bradford, Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire, one of the peers who had voted Sacheverell "Guilty," that—

"Her Majesty had expressed her Royal displeasure at the riotous and seditious proceedings in his county, fomented and encouraged by Dr. Henry Sacheverell, in breach of her public peace; and that it was Her Majesty's pleasure

that his lordship and the gentlemen of the Council would apprehend and prosecute the offenders with the utmost severity of the law."

The Queen was deeply incensed that the Ministry should seek shelter from the ridicule of the country behind the Royal mantle.

The letter was the more exasperating as it was well known that Her Majesty was friendly to Sacheverell, and enjoyed to the full the confusion which had overtaken his persecutors. But soon the Queen had still deeper reasons for anger against her ministers, for again she had to endure the immeasurable grief of seeing them throw away an opportunity of ending the war.

France had once more abased herself to the Netherlands, and again had Holland agreed to treat with her. To Gertruydenberg, the place appointed for the conferences, were dispatched the Marquis d'Uxelles and Cardinal de Polignac. The Marquis was an old soldier, who for the first time found himself obliged to sustain with his wits a cause which hitherto he had supported with his sword. De Polignac was, however, a match in intellect for the most accomplished diplomatists of the allies. De Torcy had been willing to sacrifice everything and had obtained nothing. Yet was he master almost by hereditary right of the art of bargaining about the domains of nations. He had, moreover, been

trained from youth in the embassies of Western Europe. De Polignac was of a totally different type, though the difference was too subtle to be apparent. He was a scholar, a wit, a man of letters, a philosopher whose intellectual gifts were adorned with the taste, the vivacity, the easy affability of perfect breeding. De Polignac, on behalf of his master, not only offered to acknowledge the Archduke Charles as King of Spain, but to pay a million livres a month to the allies until Philip should have been driven out to Peru or Mexico, or whithersoever it should please him to set up afresh his Throne. But the English Government, which was Marlborough, was adamant. The grandfather should make war on the grandson and great-grandchildren. The Dutch took their orders with docility. The Emperor was equally complaisant. And so de Polignac, of all the talents, failed as de Torcy had failed before him; but happier than de Torcy, he left behind a sting which enhanced the reputation of his Eminence, and hurt the Dutch like the loss of a border town.

"One can see," he said to the Dutchmen, "you are not accustomed to victory!"

But if the Government was deaf to the miseries of France and the silent anguish of English homes, not so Anne. The hour had come for her to assert herself. She would

have one victory, greater in its way than all Marlborough's crowded roll of triumphs. The acclamations showered by the multitude upon Sacheverell, and the satire with which the cultured visited his enemies, were welcome incentives to action. And if she had any doubt as to how she should move, there was Mrs. Masham always ready to be the mouthpiece of the nation! Mrs. Masham and Robert Harley now allied for the great effort of their lives! Sunderland had set the wheels spinning which placed fortune in Harley's hands; and so the Cabinet of the Backstairs decreed the fall of their enemies the Whigs, and by the most courageous act of her life the Queen assented, though she knew it would shake her Throne.

CHAPTER XXXVII

"NOW is your Majesty Queen indeed." Thus spake Henry Somerset, second Duke of Beaufort, to Her Majesty when the Marlboroughs and their friends having fallen, he came up to Court from Badminton. Young Beaufort was only twenty-six, but he came of a stock which more readily forgave the bold iron hand of a Cromwell than the sleek duplicity of a Marlborough. His grandfather had taken up arms for James in 1688. And in the years that followed the aged Duke preferred retirement to the favour of William. The coming of Beaufort to Court was a sign that Anne had found grace with the old nobility who, in their hearts, were devoted to the Stuarts, and hoped, despite every omen, for their ultimate triumph.

Not without long and bitter conflict, however, had the Queen overthrown the circle so long masters of her destiny.

Exquisitely cautious was the Queen's first step towards ridding herself of the Whigs. She began with the most insignificant, the Marquis of Kent.

Her Majesty was wishful to make him a Duke. Kent could not imagine why, nor could anybody else, save perhaps Harley. In exchange for his new honours he was pleased to surrender his staff as Lord Chamberlain. At this point Shrewsbury reappears.

"King of Hearts," having spent many years abroad, had recently returned to England, where his old friends had welcomed him but coldly. While in Rome, he had been a frequent visitor at the Princess Cupigni's, and there the inflammable bosom of the gallant Duke, still in the prime of life, was ravished by the beauty of a lady in whose veins ran the best blood of Italy and England. This was Adelhida, daughter of the Marquis Paliotti, of Bologna, by a lady of the House of Northumberland. Adelhida was a Catholic, but Shrewsbury, whether as theologian or rhetorician or lover, or all three combined, was too much for the lady, and in deference to his opinions she is said to have adjured her faith. This solicitude for her eternal welfare might have been deemed sufficient proof of his eagerness to promote her temporal happiness in the fellowship of matrimony. But the scandalmongers attributed to the Duke a shyness at the eleventh hour as unaccountable as it was ungallant. Gossip asserted that his Grace had led Adelhida to the altar at the point of the sword—at the

points, indeed, of a pair of weapons in the hands of the lady's two brothers.

On reaching England, Shrewsbury quickly discovered that "King of Hearts" was dethroned. His old friends gave him the chilling welcome accorded a deserter who was too powerful to be altogether ignored. Painting and architecture had for years absorbed him. Godolphin knew nothing of either, Sarah cared for neither; her husband had no time for either. Somerset was the Duchess of Shrewsbury's kinsman; but Somerset was aghast at her Grace's Italian manners. She behaved as though she were ordinary flesh, without a drop of Royal blood in her vivacious person—behaved, indeed, as if the cult of ancestral veneration were to her an undiscovered and undreamt-of gospel.

From London Shrewsbury fled to the country. But alas! the county grandees stared at him as though he had returned from the clouds, stared at his lady as though he had found her in the skies. The dames of Worcestershire and Shropshire weighed the ducal pair in the balance. They were found wanting. The taint of Rome was upon them. Their air bespoke unpatriotic interest in music and painting, books and architecture. Let them be frozen!

And they were. The Shrewsburys continued their wanderings to Oxfordshire. There Robert

Harley found the Duke nursing his pique. Many a meeting had the pair as they hunted over Cotswold Downs, and in the breathing-spaces Harley repaired the defects attending on Shrewsbury's self-imposed exile, and created a mental vista in which the great nobleman, wounded in his vanity, discerned a clear path to his former dignity and to vengeance. If his old friends the Whigs, jealous perhaps of his ability, hurt too that he should have deserted for so long the battle-ground of politics for a life of leisure, would not welcome him back, then the loss be on their own heads. It was not for him to languish in the country when Court and Senate were open to him. And so he returned to London, his Duchess with him, to exact retribution.

Kent's staff was handed to his Grace. To Harley, who now cherished more than ever the idea of governing with the help of both parties, the new Lord Chamberlain's Whig record made him the treasure beyond price.

A gentleman visiting him two days after he had received the staff, the Duke asked him what the town said. He answered that they said he was opening the door to a Tory Ministry. His Grace had a retort ready:

"I open no door," he said, "but what I can shut when I please!"

When, later, this oracular pronouncement reached Marlborough's ears, in Brussels, he remarked that if a man cut a dyke he did not know how much water might flow in, and could not stop it when he would. In the long run, however, the oracle was verified. Shrewsbury had opened the door, and Shrewsbury it was who slammed it tight when the Prince of Wales was at the threshold.

Godolphin's surprise at finding Shrewsbury thrust into the Cabinet by his Royal Mistress was as though she had performed a miracle. As mediocrity ages its world becomes a medley of fixed ideas. In Godolphin's mind, Anne had grown to be the more or less pliable instrument of an oligarchy. Only once had he known her to take a momentous decision: that was when she had deserted her father and turned the balance against him irrevocably. But this revolt of hers against the Whigs required still greater courage; and that one whom he hitherto regarded as a woman who could always be either cowed or humoured should possess it, left him dumbfounded. He awoke to find that he had been living in a fool's Paradise. The letter in which he betrayed his rage and disappointment is a perfect summary of the measures by which for years he had ruled Anne. It illuminates the most secret recesses of his heart. All his life

had he worshipped at a false shrine. To him kings and princes were gods, the Court a heaven. To be cast out when his hair was white was perhaps the worst hell he could imagine. From Newmarket the angry statesman wrote:

"Your Majesty is suffering yourself to be guided to your own ruin and destruction as fast as it is possible for them to accomplish it, to whom you seem so much to hearken.

"I am not, therefore, so much surprised as concerned at the resolution, which your Majesty says you have taken, of bringing in the Duke of Shrewsbury. For when people began to be sensible it would be difficult to persuade your Majesty to dissolve a Parliament which for two winters together had given you above six millions a year for the support of a war upon which your Crown depends; even while that war is still subsisting, they have had the cunning to contrive this proposal to your Majesty, which, in its consequence, will certainly put you under a necessity of breaking the Parliament, though contrary, I yet believe, to your mind and intention. I beg your Majesty to be persuaded, I do not say this out of the least prejudice to the Duke of Shrewsbury. There is no man of whose capacity I have had a better impression, nor with whom I have lived more easily and freely for above twenty years. Your Majesty may please to remember that at your first coming to the Crown I was desirous he should have had one of the chief posts in your service; and it would have been happy for your Majesty and

the kingdom had he accepted that offer. But he thought fit to decline it, and the reasons generally given at that time for his doing so do not much recommend him to your Majesty's service. But I must endeavour to let your Majesty see things as they really are. And to bring him into your service, and into your business at this time, just after his being in a public open conjunction in every vote with the whole body of the Tories, and in a private constant correspondence, and caballing with Mr. Harley in everything: what consequence can this possibly have but to make every man that is now in your Cabinet . . . to run from it as they would from the plague?

"I leave to your Majesty to judge what effect this entire change of your Ministers will have among your allies abroad, and how well this war is like to be carried on, in their opinion, by those who have all along opposed and obstructed it; and who will like any peace better the more it leave the French at liberty to take their time of imposing the Pretender upon this country.

"These considerations must immediately make Holland run into a separate peace with France, and make your Majesty lose all the honour and all the reputation your arms had acquired by the war, and make the kingdom lose all the fruits of that vast expense they have been at in this war, as well as all the advantages and safety which they have so much need of, and had so fair a prospect of obtaining by it. And can anybody imagine that after so great a disappointment to the kingdom there will not be an inquiry into the causes of it; and who have been the occasions of so great a change in your Majesty's measures and counsels, which have been so long

successful and got you so great a name in the world? I am very much afraid your Majesty will find, when it is too late, that it will be a pretty difficult task for anybody to stand against such an inquiry.

"I am sure, if I did not think all these consequences inevitable, I would never give your Majesty the trouble and uneasiness of laying them before you. But persuaded as I am that your Majesty will find them so, it is my indispensable duty to do it out of pure faithfulness and zeal for your Majesty's service and honour. Your Majesty having taken a resolution of so much consequence to your affairs at home and abroad, without acquainting the Duke of Marlborough or me with it, till after you had taken it, is the least part of my mortification in this whole affair, though the world may think the long and faithful service we have constantly and zealously endeavoured to do your Majesty might have deserved a little more consideration. However, for my own part, I most humbly beg leave to assure your Majesty I will never give the least obstruction to your measures, or to any minister you may please to employ. And I must beg further to make two humble requests to your Majesty: the one, that you will allow me to pass the remainder of my life always out of London, where I may find most ease and quiet; the other that you will keep this letter and read it again about next Christmas, and then be pleased to make your own judgment who hath given you the best and most faithful advice."

Thus did Godolphin begin by trying to frighten the poor Queen—the simplest formula ever

devised for controlling a woman. Let her yield to the machinations of Harley and Masham, and all her old and tried ministers would resign and leave her to her fate. And as for that fate, who could imagine all that it implied for Her Majesty's Crown and life? And then, having made the unhappy woman tremble, he changed his tone; and at the change it was the writer's turn to tremble for himself and for all he adored. All her ministers might resign—all save one. Him she might wound and disappoint and anger, still would he serve her—with any colleagues she might choose, on any terms she might dictate. All might go, but one would remain, and he the bowed veteran of them all—Godolphin would serve her with his last breath. Never was there a more pathetic complaint, never a more abject surrender.

Most assuredly the Duchess of Marlborough did not approve of that letter. To Anne it gave new spirit. Godolphin would remain until he was driven into retirement. Harley could desire nothing better.

The next victim of the Court war against the Whigs was Sunderland. From every point of view it was a wise choice. His fall would redound to the glory of the Tories, and would weaken the Ministry; but, despite his ability and prowess as a political fighter, he was not so

beloved of his colleagues that for his sake they would resign in a body. Sarah was frantic. Her son-in-law should be spared! But Sunderland had never spared Her Majesty, and his removal would be a personal triumph for the Queen, as well as a political gain. The Earl had never made any secret of his contempt for princes generally, leaving Anne to draw her own inferences as to his opinion of princesses. Now she would make him smart for his republicanism.

It was about the beginning of June 1710 the word went round that Sunderland was to be sacrificed. Marlborough, deeply perturbed on hearing the ominous news, wrote from Flanders a humble appeal to the Queen. Like Godolphin, not content, however, with an effort to soothe Her Majesty's resentment, he essayed to play upon her fears. He begged her to consider the effect upon the allies of a step which would appear to them a startling reward for the great services of the British commander. He likewise besought Godolphin to leave nothing undone to avert the downfall of the Earl.

Sarah, at this crisis in the fortunes of her family, was not inactive. But her attempts to stay the Queen's resolve were, as might be expected, of little advantage to the object of her solicitude. Not, however, for the sake of her family did Sarah enter the fray! With her it

was pure love of country! And if any lowlier motive actuated her, then was it affection for the great warrior whose sword was the glory of England—and her own!

The diplomacy of the patriot-duchess on behalf of her son-in-law soon resolved itself into a scolding contest, in which the Queen took her share. Her Majesty blamed Sarah for inspiring cabals to obtain the dismissal of Mrs. Masham from Court. The Duchess was aghast at the unworthy imputation. As for Mrs. Masham, though she had no reason to love her, yet such was the generosity of her nature that she rejoiced in the prosperity of her gentle cousin! True, there had been talk of an address petitioning for the good Masham's dismissal, but it was a purely political affair, and such a wish had never entered her Grace's mind! But the Queen was in a mood for combat, and to Sarah's fair words she gave something like the lie direct.

"I could not forbear," quoth Sarah, in her account of the wrangle, "for my own vindication to write a second letter, in which I assured Her Majesty that I should not have troubled her with the first but that I heard it reported that the persecution begun against Lord Marlborough and his family was chiefly occasioned by Her Majesty's displeasure and aversion to me, as having promoted an address against Mrs.

Masham; that it was only to vindicate myself from that aspersion that I have presumed to trouble her; that I could not imagine it could be interpreted as an offence to vindicate myself from what was now made the pretence for turning out Lord Sunderland and putting Lord Marlborough to extremities; that I had no reason to think that the assuring Her Majesty that I would never have any hand in anything against Mrs. Masham could have been construed as an ungrateful speaking about her, or called a continuation of ill-usage; that I thought this was a complying with Her Majesty's inclination, and saying what the world could not but approve; that all the politics in my letter was my concern for Lord Marlborough, making it at best my most earnest request that Her Majesty would only defer the blow until the end of the campaign. This, I added, I begged upon my knees, and left Her Majesty to judge whether after such an expression it was likely that I should ever enter into anything that could displease her. Whether my interfering in the matter," concludes Sarah, "hastened the execution of the design, I cannot say. Certain it is that it did not retard it."

On June 14, 1710, Sunderland was dismissed. The blow had fallen, and now no Whig statesman dare call one further minute of official life

his very own. Yet would they make a desperate effort to stand together and defy the Queen. Their dismay had in it little of patriotic anxiety. It was the terror of children threatened with the loss of that upon which their hearts were wholly set, office they would cling to at any cost. It was everything. Their first anxiety was lest Marlborough, in a fit of pique at the slight put upon his family, should resign. A letter was therefore composed for transmission to the General on the very day of Sunderland's dismissal. It was signed by Cowper, who took priority as Lord Chancellor, then by Godolphin, Somers, Newcastle, Devonshire, Orford, and Henry Boyle. Strangely enough, there was one other signature, Halifax, who was at the same time in friendly correspondence with Harley.

"We should not have given your Grace the trouble of this joint letter," wrote their lordships, "but for the great concern and uneasiness in which we find you on account of my Lord Sunderland, by your letter to my Lord Treasurer, which he has communicated to us. That letter, as moving and as reasonable as it was, has not hindered the seal from being taken this morning from my Lord Sunderland. No wonder, then, that the utmost endeavour which could be used to prevent it, and the strong arguments that have been made of the ill-consequences that must attend such steps at home and abroad have met with so little success. We find ourselves so

much affected with this misfortune that we cannot but be extremely sensible of the great mortification this must give you at this critical juncture, when you are every moment hazarding your life in the service of your country, and whilst the fate of Europe depends in so great a degree on your conduct and good success. But we are also as fully convinced that it is impossible for your Grace to quit the service at this time without the utmost hazard to the whole alliance. And we must, therefore, conjure you by the glory you have already obtained, by the many services you have done your Queen and country, by the expectation you have fully raised in all Europe, and by all that is dear and tender to you at home, whose chief dependence is ever your success, that you would not leave this great work unfinished, but continue at the head of the army. This we look upon as the most necessary step that can be taken to prevent the dissolution of this Parliament. Your Grace's compliance with this our earnest request would be the greatest obligation to us, and all that wish well to our country, and you may depend upon it, that the contrary will be the greatest satisfaction to your enemies."

The Queen, however, was not to be shaken in her resolution by the fear that Marlborough would resign. It had taken years to rouse in her the dogged resolve to be free. And now this benign matron, with the musical voice and the heart so tender that she had a tear for the misfortunes of every rascal, was ready to go to

the block rather than be diverted from her purpose. Her Majesty, with a magnanimity which was not, perhaps, innocent of a little womanly pity, and perhaps a little womanly cowardice, offered the fallen Secretary a pension of three thousand a year. The Earl, however, had not his father's catholic appreciation of gold from whatever quarter it came.

"If I cannot have the honour to serve my country," he said, "I will not plunder it."

The Earl of Dartmouth received the vacant seals, and then there was a lull, during which Godolphin tried to delude himself that the deluge had been averted. The decisive blow fell in August, when Anne wrote to the Lord Treasurer his dismissal. Godolphin had reached his sixty-fifth year. From his youth he had been in the service of the Court. Charles liked him because he was never in the way and never out of it; James because he managed the finances well and honestly. William employed him for the same reason; and Anne followed the example of her predecessors, partly because she liked and trusted this cock-fighting courtier whom she had known from childhood, but mainly because his connection with the Marlboroughs had allowed her no choice.

In his heart of hearts Godolphin was a Tory, but all his life he had played his part as circum-

stances had ordained it. He had sacrificed at one time or another every political principle, if any he possessed, asking, as his sole return, that he might be allowed to serve the Crown. He had trimmed, he had intrigued, he had coquetted with treachery. Now he could trim no longer. He had nothing left to sacrifice. There was no one to betray. But life without office was impossible for one who had so long borne the yoke. The future belonged to younger men, who would not serve him, and whom he could not serve because they would not have him. Within two years he was dead, his worthiest epitaph being that he died a poor man in an age when political corruption was a venial sin.

The Queen felt some emotion at parting with Godolphin. He was permitted to break the staff he had held so long, nor was he to have a successor. The Treasury was put into commission, with Earl Poulet as its chief, and Harley Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Harley's object was to carry on the Government with as few changes as possible. He had some hopes of being able to do so. Halifax had seen Somers and his friends of the junto one by one enter the Government, and calmly enjoying the sweets of office resign themselves to his exclusion. Halifax, however, was not resigned. He coquetted with Harley, perhaps to alarm his

Whig friends, perhaps with more serious motives. If the latter, his chance had now come. Harley, who, though holding a minor office, was in reality Prime Minister, would have welcomed Halifax into the Administration. The opportunity, however, passed. Halifax hesitated at the last moment to imperil his career for what he doubtless regarded as a passing advantage, or the Queen may have declined the services of so clever and determined a supporter of the House of Hanover.

He therefore remained in opposition, and was once more joined by his old friends, Somers, Cowper, Orford, Wharton, Boyle, and Robert Walpole, who, alive at last to the weakness and folly of awaiting dismissal one by one, as it should serve Harley's convenience, retired in a body, but too late to reap any credit from a move, prompted by despair, which only anticipated the designs of their now exultant enemies.

Harley had won a greater victory than he had bargained for, or, indeed, desired, for only three important members of the Whig party remained to smooth the path of the Queen's new advisers. These were Somerset, Marlborough, and Lord Cholmondeley, Treasurer of the Household. Harley, Dartmouth, and Shrewsbury were joined by Anne's old friend and suitor, the Duke of Buckinghamshire, as Lord Steward. Her uncle

Rochester became Lord President, Ormonde resumed the Viceroyalty, Sir William Wyndham replaced Walpole at the War Office, and Simon Harcourt, Sacheverell's accomplished champion, was appointed Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, in which capacity he presided over the House of Lords, until by-and-by he was created a Viscount and later Lord Chancellor.

To add to the anxieties of the crisis, Count de Gallas, the Emperor's Ambassador in London, and Vrybergen, the Dutch envoy to the British Court, united in representing to Her Majesty the anxiety with which the changes in the ministry had been observed by her allies. This impertinent interference is said to have been inspired by Marlborough, who disdained no weapon that could advance his cause, or, failing that, embarrass his enemies.

The Queen's reply to the meddlesome foreigners did not relieve their disquietude or allay Marlborough's sense of injury. Whatever changes she thought proper to make at home, Her Majesty would continue the Duke of Marlborough at the head of her army. This was all the consolation she could offer his Imperial Majesty, and was a milder snub than he had a right to anticipate.

Marlborough's revenge was to reopen correspondence with the exiled Royal Family. He

wrote to his nephew, the Duke of Berwick, assuring him that he would resign his command unless by retaining it he could advance the interests of the Prince of Wales. At St. Germains little faith was reposed in his Grace, but lest being slighted he should most certainly injure the cause, Mary Beatrice answered him civilly and forwarded the reply to the Prince, then serving under Villars in Flanders. From James the communication reached the English lines through a French trumpet. This letter shows that Mary Beatrice had mastered some of the cunning of diplomacy during the years of continuous disappointment since she had rejected with scorn the offer of William to adopt the Prince of Wales.

"Your retreat," she wrote, "will render you useless to your friends, and an easy prey to your enemies. You are too large a mark to be missed by the shafts of malice. The safety of your opponents consists in your ruin. They will reduce the army, where you have such great influence. They will fill all the branches of the revenue with their creatures. The credit of the new officers, the influence of their preachers, the weight of the Treasury, will not fail to return a Parliament very different to the present. Throw not, therefore, away the means of supporting yourself and of assisting your friends. You are lost if you quit your employments. But there is great difficulty in keeping them with

dignity. Interest now declares for your honour, you cannot be in safety without doing justice, nor prove your greatness without discharging your duty. The time is precious to you and important to my son. You desire us to apply to Mrs. Masham, the new favourite of the Princess Anne. How can we, my lord, apply to a stranger? Mrs. Masham owes us no obligation. She has neither pledged her faith nor promised her assistance. You have repeatedly done both, my lord; and now it is in your power to place my son in a position to protect yourself."

For Marlborough it was a sadly disappointing letter. Even the Queen-mother had, it seemed, lived long enough to find him out. Her ingenuous innocence concerning Masham was especially tantalising. For nothing could have been more precious to Marlborough than some proof in the handwriting of Mary Beatrice that Anne's new favourite was a Jacobite agent. But alas! he had learned nothing which could either frighten Anne or ruin Masham. Chagrined at Mary Beatrice's polite rebuff, the Duke is found a month or two later making overtures to Hanover; but what cared he who should next fill the Throne of England, so that the Sovereign was his bondman?

All the changes which Anne had so bravely accomplished were trivial compared with one which had yet to be effected. The Whig ministers had been swept away, but there re-

mained the Whig Mistress of the Robes, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.

Sarah had long foreseen that the ascendency of her party was in jeopardy. One day ere yet the Queen had dared to take action, she betook herself to Kensington to propose a surrender of all her offices, on her own terms. Sarah's plan was to retire, and obtain the reversion of her places for her daughters. But over and above the immediate object of her visit, Sarah had many minor ones in view. Incidentally she would prove that in all matters, great and small, she had been always right, and the Queen always wrong. Deft thrusts would somehow be got in at her enemies. But Sarah essayed too much. She could not in an hour vanquish the Queen, get even with her calumniators, and at the same time obtain for her daughters the highest preferment.

Since the Duchess's outbreak at Windsor, Anne dreaded meeting her alone. The Queen had just dined when Sarah reached Kensington Palace, and before Her Majesty could fly to safety the page of the backstairs had shown her into the Royal presence. The storm burst almost at once. The suitor for great favours began with a cross-examination of her Royal Mistress. Had this matron said such a thing? Had that maid said the other? It was a disastrous start.

To allay the storm, Anne offered the consolation that many lies were told. This general assault upon the veracity of their acquaintances did not pacify the visitor. So the tirade proceeded. In a letter to the Queen soliciting the audience, Sarah, as a stroke of diplomacy, assured Her Majesty that what she had to say would require "No answer." Ruinous diplomacy! The art of holding her tongue was that of all others in which Anne excelled. Thus, settling herself as comfortably as the occasion permitted to digest her dinner, the Queen answered never a word to all that was said. Sarah had said no answer was required, and devil an answer should she have.

The afternoon wore on, yet there was no sign of Sarah's pace slackening. At last Anne threatened to leave the room, for—blessings on the builder!—here there were doors in ample measure. Oh, no, madame, not for worlds! Heaven forbid Her Majesty should leave the room for her! She had suffered much. But thank God she had too sweet a nature to urge her wrongs at the cost of her Queen's convenience. And out flounced Sarah to the gallery, where she sat weeping.

If she hoped that her distress would move the Queen to compassion, she was disappointed, and Sarah, growing tired of tears, returned to

the Royal cabinet. Many a quiet laugh did Anne enjoy at the absurdities of Court and courtiers. Hard pressed must she have been now to preserve a straight face at the picture the Duchess presented as she recrossed the threshold.

Sarah could not be otherwise than beautiful. But classic loveliness when dishevelled has a drollery exquisitely ridiculous. The beautiful Sarah's eyes were red with weeping, her face flushed, her perfect nose pink, her bonnet doubtless awry, in arch contrast with the chaste symmetry of a Grecian profile.

Sarah had been practising humility in the gallery. But not in ten minutes could the supreme virtue be mastered, and Sarah's toilsome effort to play her new part only heightened the absurdity. The repentant Mistress of the Robes, the outraged but forgiving dame, only wanted to assure Her Majesty that when the Court moved to Windsor she would deny herself the pleasure of being at the Lodge, as her presence there could not fail to be displeasing. But Anne was almost gaily condescending. Sarah's red eyes cheered her. And the pink nose! By all means let her Grace be at the Lodge and attend the Court, it would cause the Queen no uneasiness whatever. A humble duchess would have begged leave to kiss the tips of her Princess's fingers and have retreated from the cabinet,

But alas for Sarah's reputation as an actress! She forgot her part after the first sentence. The Queen's indifference exasperated her. Again the eyes flashed fire, as though a tear had never tempered their brilliancy.

"Your Majesty," cried Sarah, "will suffer for your inhumanity."

"That will be to myself," said Anne, and thus ended the Duchess's embassy in the service of her daughters.

This interview, as has been said, preceded the downfall of the Administration, yet though the junto had fallen, Sarah remained. The Queen wished the Duchess of Somerset to be her new Mistress of the Robes and Groom of the Stole. But the Gold Keys were in Sarah's keeping, and who would rescue them? Harley's patience found the way out of the difficulty. It was agreed that Sarah should be allowed to retain the insignia of office until her husband returned from Flanders. When, therefore, the warrior reached England in the December of 1710, this was the mission which awaited him, the crown, as it were, of all his campaigning.

The post of suppliant came easy to Marlborough. He obtained an audience with the object of disarming Anne's resentment. But the Queen was inflexible. To his pleading she had but one answer. Her Gold Keys! Her Gold Keys!

The general who had never been worsted flung himself on his knees before the Royal lady. What was this she asked? Had he not filled her hands to overflowing with glory? To the end would they not speak of the martial triumphs of her reign. There was Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and many another. Her palaces and cathedrals were draped with the banners of her enemies. A thousand times had he ridden through a hail of bullets, every one a messenger of death, all for her service. And death had passed him by only for this.

The Queen was obstinate. She would have the Gold Keys. The great man on his knees was silent. He had spoken his last word, prayed his last prayer. For one instant more he knelt without uttering a word.

With head bowed, it was his supreme appeal, leaving his advocacy to her woman's heart. But her heart was flint. It too failed him.

Up rose the Duke. The calmness that never deserted him on the field was with him still. Serene in the hour of victory, he was more serene than ever in this the first bitterness of defeat. If aught could move the Queen, it would be this more than human calm. But she was immovable. And Marlborough left her for the battle of his life. Had the Queen but told him to plant her flag above any city in Europe,

however strong its walls, however valiant its garrison, cheerfully would he have buckled on his sword and away. But her command was to assail a fortress which he could neither mine nor storm, to carry a city which was as much beyond him as though it were built on a magical isle.

The Duke of Marlborough, as the Queen's ambassador, had a hot reception from the Duchess. Never would she yield what she had held so long. The Duke insisted. The devil take him and his insistence to bully his wife for a creature like Anne Stuart! If he were half a man he would die in a ditch before doing her bidding. But Marlborough's blood was up now. Two defeats would be too much. Anne had repulsed him. With Sarah he should conquer or die of ridicule. He had let this woman have her head for years for the sake of peace, now she would know him for what he really was—the master, the man who, when driven to it, feared nothing on earth, not even his terrible wife.

The more resolute, the more determined he grew, the more impressive became that terrible calm. It awed even Sarah. For the first time, perhaps, she realised how different was this husband of hers from other men. This man of marble would kill her or have his way. And protesting she would never part with the keys, she, it has been said, flung them at his head.

Too happy to have secured them to bother about the form of delivery, Marlborough brought them immediately to the Queen, and Sarah belonged to the Royal Household no more.

The Duchess of Somerset was given the Gold Keys, and then Mrs. Masham became Keeper of the Privy Purse. Now did Anne imagine herself, as Beaufort had said, Queen indeed! But Sarah would not be denied some compensation, and so she demanded the arrears of the annuity of two thousand a year offered her by Anne years before, when Parliament declined to settle a pension on Marlborough. The sum was paid, and as a token of her gratitude, the Duchess, when later she was obliged to vacate her apartments at St. James's, dismantled the rooms.

Harley, having failed to form a coalition with the Whigs, found himself surrounded by High Tories, who disliked his compromising spirit, doubted his sincerity, and held his talents but cheaply. A dramatic step, however, at once established his popularity and his power. A Frenchman, the Marquis de Guiscard, after a career of profligacy on the Continent, fled to England, where he was welcomed as the stainless victim of foreign tyranny. His original call had been to the Church, but the pleasures and distractions of this brief life here below were

more alluring to the Marquis than an eternal heritage. Without a shred of reputation he reached England, where his engaging manners, and scorn of truth, obtained for him from his dupes the offer of ecclesiastical preferment.

Luckily for the Church, Guiscard was too bold a rascal for a cassock. King William's commission as commandant of a foreign regiment was more agreeable to a gentleman whose gallantries might pass for regular living in a camp, but in no age or country could be accounted true to the atmosphere of a cathedral. The Marquis's regiment, at all events, was little likely to be scandalised by their colonel. They were, it is said, the wickedest body of men in Europe, but demons in the field.

In London the Marquis was a welcome guest wherever gamblers and gay fellows assembled, and in such society he could not avoid a meeting with the most brilliant rake of the days of Anne, now one of Her Majesty's Secretaries of State, Henry St. John. The French adventurer is said to have quarrelled with St. John about a lady of more beauty than virtue. Such a quarrel in the case of the débonnaire St. John would be but a passing cloud on a sunlit sky. Damn the lady! She was but one in a world full of them. And Guiscard was forgiven.

It is said that through the influence of St. John

the Queen gave the Marquis an allowance of five hundred a year. Harley, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, promptly cut it down. This piece of economy was probably connected with the dissensions which had already begun to appear in the new Cabinet. Harley's Government had indeed barely come into existence when he began to fear mischief from his most brilliant subordinate. In the Council, in Parliament, St. John had no peer in wit or eloquence. Harley, ponderously wise, so reverent towards precedent, was no match for the handsome aristocrat, the profligate by night, the statesman by day ; the wit, the genius, the gamester in all things, always. The slice taken off Guiscard's pension may have been meant as a snub to St. John, or by way of contempt for dare-devil Frenchmen generally. Whatever the reason, never did a trifle produce more surprising consequences.

Guiscard, in a fit of pique at the slight, entered into treasonable correspondence with a French banker named Moreau. He was arrested in March 1711 on a warrant signed by his patron, St. John, who was equally ready to spit or pension him. Guiscard's arrest was treated with a degree of importance which indicates the place he held in the life of the town. The Council was immediately summoned and met at St. John's office in the Cockpit. There the prisoner was subjected

to a searching cross-examination. In the midst of the proceedings the desperado stepped to Harley's side, and before his intention was suspected had struck at him twice with a penknife.

The victim of the attack was in gala attire, for it was the anniversary of the Queen's accession. His coat, after the fashion of the day, was open at the breast, showing a blue and silver waistcoat flowered with rich gold brocade flowers. His dress was not, however, all finery. He wore a flannel undervest and still another roll of flannel next the skin. These homely shields against the treacherous winds of March saved his life. What with gold brocade and flannel, Guiscard's knife struck no contemptible cuirass. The Prime Minister fell, wounded seriously, while St. John and the Dukes of Ormonde and Newcastle rushed upon the frenzied Marquis with drawn swords. The Frenchman fought like a tiger. St. John's sword snapped, and Guiscard closing with him, the clerk's table was overthrown. Young Beaufort sent a stool flying at the enemy. If it missed Guiscard it probably caught St. John, or one of his brother dukes. Ormonde had been a generous friend to Guiscard. His regard had now been testified with a sword-thrust in the bowels.

The unhappy wretch was dragged away to Newgate, and there he languished and died of his wounds. The Queen sent her own physician

to soothe the reprobate's death-bed. The doomed of Newgate were indeed seldom far from Anne's mind. There was no man so vile that she would kill him. And so even Harley's would-be assassin, the cut-throat from the South, received this amazing proof of her tenderness.

Guiscard had lived just long enough to make the Prime Minister's fortune. If it be true that the knife was really intended for St. John, then was the Secretary hardly dealt with by Fate. Not for a certainty, however, did Harley rob him of his luck, for as St. John probably wore less flannel than his chief, he might not, like him, have lived to profit by his wounds. With death staring him in the face, Harley had shown the courage and fortitude of a soldier. Guiscard had effected a transformation, and Harley—brave old Harley!—became in a day a public idol. The town joined with Parliament in doing honour to the hero. And on his recovery the Queen created him Earl of Oxford and Mortimer. Perhaps one should say that the earldom was his own appreciation of himself. And when in due course St. John got a title it was a step lower in the Peerage, the viscounty of Bolingbroke. That was Harley's grudging appreciation of his rival, an appreciation which converted the younger man's rivalry into rancour and prepared the way for that revenge which was finally the ruin of both.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Oh gin I were a bonny bird,
  Wi' wings that I might flee,
Then I wad travel o'er the main,
  My ain true love, to thee!

Then wad I tell a joyful tale,
  To ane that's dear to me,
And sit upon a king's window,
  And sing my melody.

TREASON, rank treason! And in Kensington Palace, too! But oh! so sweet a song, so sweetly sung! In fancy one can hear the plaintive appeal float into the night, and, straying through the trees, lose itself in the vast garden of shadow, while the singer, half-proud of her treason, half-sorry perhaps, turns from the harpsichord to her companion.

And who should the companion be but Anne, and who the traitress but good Masham!

The birds, nestling to sleep in the eaves and branches outside, whistled softly and drowsily to one another their wonder and delight at the

mysterious nightingale! They chirped, as it seemed, note by note:

> And sit upon a king's window,
> And sing my melody,

repeating it over and over again as though, Jacobites every one, they twittered back some countersign to the rebel in the Palace. And listening to the dainty cavaliers billeted in the greenery around her, Anne too would be a rebel, if rebel a queen could be; for here there were none to see her tears save this waiting-woman who loved her, and loved him, her brother, the wanderer.

The Court was full of Jacobites. Of them all there was none of purer faith or higher courage than Masham. She loved her young "king over the water" with passionate devotion that made light of risks, and certain would she be when, at the Queen's bidding, she sat to the harpsichord to pour out her loyal heart in this beautiful ballad of the sweetest poet ever inspired to sing of the misfortunes of a broken king. Sweet, sweet treason! Divine narcotic, exalting Anne above the selfish world of Court and politics, to dream blessed dreams in a world of romance where she walked with her brother, where she loved and was beloved!

On Masham's lips that melody would breathe

no reproach. To her, Anne was the victim of Fate. What was past was done with. It was on the future her eyes were set, and enamoured of the gallant boy who had played so bravely the Stuart Prince on the stricken fields of Flanders, the passion of her life was to teach the Queen, his sister, to love him and help him to his own again. Love him Anne did, now that she no longer feared him. The Crown was hers; a gilded torture she found it, yet would she cling to it, because she knew no better, no nobler way. But if only young James were in London as Prince of Wales, then would she be happy as a queen in a story, and all the love from which little Gloucester had fled—love grown vaster, and purer, and more tender with years, and suffering, and comprehension—would she lavish on him. How proudly would she introduce him to her Lords and her Commons!

Could one to-day but summon back the spirit of Anne to earth, and behold its dreams of those last desolate years of her reign, at her right hand one would see a handsome laughing boy. All care would be banished from his brow, if a sister's affection could efface the bitter memories of those years during which he had been condemned to eat the stranger's bread. Hear him speak! It would be in French, with the gay abandonment, the

airy grace of Versailles. And the smooth, tripping tongue of France would have for the queen no accusing sting. The time of estrangement from her kindred would be blotted out altogether. And she would see him the hero-prince who had suffered hard fortune, through nobody's fault, and was the more charming for his French accent and the sparkle of the Bourbon Court.

But these blessed dreams—how were they to be realised? The Prince was the *protégé* of France, and France was the enemy of her land and his. The future was black as inky night, and in it she could discern no omen of promise for her brother. But to end the war had become with her a passionate longing. Peace would be a boon to England. Without it there could be no friendly arrangement with St. Germains. One of the first acts, therefore, of the new Ministry was to cast round for some trusty agent who would whisper at Versailles that the peace so often desired at The Hague might be obtained in London.

Marshal de Tallard, who had been held captive at Nottingham since the rout of the French at Blenheim, was given his liberty, and sent to Paris with friendly overtures. Tallard's reception was as encouraging as had been anticipated, and a mission, enveloped in deepest secrecy, was

then confided by Anne's Government to a French priest, the Abbé Gaultier. The Abbé had mastered, so far as a foreigner could, the bewildering intricacies of English politics. He had been de Tallard's chaplain during the latter's long exile, and on the Marshal's return to France had entered the household of the Countess of Jersey. He was now dispatched to France with the message of all others most welcome there.

Concerning the plans of the Ministry for the Royal exile, Tories held their tongues in public. But in private, caution was thrown to the winds, and when glasses were charged, the fondest desires of the heart flowed unchecked from lips that had been unsealed at the dining-room door. "The king over the water!" was the idol of every good Tory's worship. Their fathers and grandfathers had died for the Stuarts. It might be, they admitted, that neither James II. nor James III. was the ideal king for Englishmen, whose faith was the faith of honest fox-hunting Christians, in the saddle six days of the week, at church as by law established on the seventh, with plenteous liquor and a groaning board for workday, holiday, and Sunday alike.

But it was the way of the Stuarts to save their souls and damn their souls, please and displease their subjects, after a fashion that was their very own. And not for worlds would these full-

blooded Tory squires mend the faults of the Royal House by ending their rule. The Stuarts at least were Britons, their sins the sins of a proud and obstinate race, who in the stronghold of their little island fought like mastiffs one day amongst themselves, and the next held the world at bay, just because they were what they were. If necessary—though God forbid the thought!—they would, as in duty bound, cut off the head of James III. But ever staunch in the faith that Britons were the true kings for Britain, they would repine that the Stuarts should push their quarrels to the death, and give the next of the breed a chance of doing better. Negotiations with St. Germains were opened by the Earl of Rochester, and those of the cavalier faith, in town and country, carried their heads high, contemplating the glories of a new Restoration.

Like a man accorded a new lease of life, Louis XIV. heard the tidings of which Gaultier was the bearer, and new life indeed it was for France. At St. Germains the halls rang with lusty island cheer, for the gallant band of loyalists who for long years had primed their courage by swearing one to another that their rightful Prince's day would come soon or late, now swore that soon it would be; that the day was at hand. Amidst the general expectancy death entered the Councils of the nations, and

laid the plans of the sages in confusion. The Emperor Joseph was stricken with small-pox, and passed away in the flower of his youth, leaving as his heir his brother, the Archduke Charles, "Charles III. of Spain," as the allies called him. The sovereignty of Spain became at once but a minor object of the Archduke's ambition. He posted to Vienna, and Prince Eugene, as generalissimo of the Empire, was bidden to guard its frontiers rather than attack the foe. Above all, he was to cover Frankfort, where the Diet of the Empire would assemble to elect Charles to the dignity which had in practice become hereditary in his family.

Though the Imperial sceptre was within his grasp, Charles did not dream of surrendering his pretensions to the Throne of Spain. That was not the spirit of the Hapsburgs. But England saw, without delight, that she had been pouring out her blood to make the Austrian Prince master, not of one Empire, but of two, to set upon his brow a crown which would eclipse not only the glory of France, but her own as well, though hers was the valour which had fashioned that splendid diadem. The death of Joseph, therefore, did more to smooth the path of Oxford than the most decisive victory that French arms could achieve. The most inveterate enemy of France could hardly argue any longer

that there was nothing to debate, that Louis had only to yield everything and join the allies in reducing Philip to submission; for supposing Philip expelled from Spain, it would be necessary to reconsider the claims of Charles, at the risk of provoking another war, in which England and the Empire would be at each other's throats.

While the negotiations progressed slowly, it was still necessary for Parliament to find enormous sums to maintain the forces in the field. This was the rock upon which the Whigs hoped the new Ministry would be wrecked. During their long years of power, Godolphin and Marlborough had welded to their interest the commercial and moneyed classes. The City men, who knew how to raise funds to meet the needs of State, were almost every one in favour of a war, from which they had, doubtless, learned to extract profit, however harshly it might press upon their countrymen, ignorant of the deeper mysteries of finance. Oxford, however, succeeded in rendering himself independent of the professional financiers by methods which compelled them to enter into his plans, or forgo the harvest which astute business men garner during a widespread fever of speculation. Oxford proposed to consolidate the National Debt, with which the wars of William and Anne had burdened the country, by creating the South Sea

Company. This Corporation was to enjoy a monopoly of trade to the South Seas, a monopoly which could of course extend only to English shipping, since the marines of other countries were equally free to sail the Southern main. The whole unfunded debt was reconstituted as one stock, bearing interest at six per cent., guaranteed by Parliament, the proprietors of the stock enjoying, furthermore, the benefits of the projected monopoly. So splendid a scheme paralysed jealousy. Whigs and Tories competed with one another in their eagerness to take up this golden investment, and far from financial embarrassments effecting Oxford's ruin, the Government emerged from them with unexpected credit.

At the moment when it seemed that the Queen's Ministry was on the high road to success, death, which had struck for them at Vienna, struck against them in London. In May, Rochester was seized with apoplexy and died, and a little later the Earl of Jersey was snatched away. The death of Rochester was an irreparable loss to his party. It was no less a calamity to the exiled Prince. He could trim on occasion, but, unlike most of the trimmers, he possessed a spirit which gloried in the excitement of the political fray. He was the true chief of the Tory High-flyers, most of whom

were courtiers only, while he was an accomplished statesman and fearless adversary. His choleric temper made him an impossible Prime Minister as compared with the sauve and conciliatory Oxford. But as leader of the dominant wing in the Government he could dictate even to the Prime Minister himself.

No need to look for subtle motives to explain Rochester's attachment to the cause of James. He was not a pattern of loyalty, but the Prince was his relative. What more natural than that he should desire at all costs to ensure the succession to one whose Throne would add lustre to his own house, a Prince who should always in some degree regard the Hydes as linked with the Royal Family? While he had everything to hope for from St. Germains, he had nothing to expect from Hanover. More surprising was Jersey's ardour for the exile. He was, as has been seen, a brother of Elizabeth Villiers, Countess of Orkney, the lady who had played so sinister a part in the life of William. The Earl was married to a Roman Catholic lady, Barbara, daughter of William Chiffinch, page to Charles II. The experience of Jersey and his wife at William's Court may have deprived them of further enthusiasm for a foreign king, or the lady's religion may have inclined her to favour the

Stuarts. But whatever the cause, Jersey was a fervent Jacobite, and, still more wonderful to relate, so was his sister, the notorious Elizabeth. He was neither soldier nor statesman, nothing more, indeed, than a handsome courtier; but his death, following so swiftly on Rochester's, could not fail to impress the devoted Masham as an evil omen.

Nor could the Royal lady have derived much solace from Lord Oxford's next step in the negotiations with France. Gaultier had returned from Paris with peace proposals, which had not commanded the approval of the Dutch. For no better reason, apparently, than a desire to conciliate his enemies at the expense of his friends, Oxford then chose Matthew Prior as the Ministerial envoy to the French Court, with Gaultier as his companion. Had Oxford been a Whig, Prior might have been regarded as a happy selection; but the Tory Prime Minister, in choosing him as his ambassador, betrayed strange indifference to the prejudices of his party. If to be a political opponent was a recommendation for so delicate and honourable an embassy, then who would trouble to be Oxford's friend?

Oxford would perhaps explain his preference for Prior with the plea that he would raise men of talent above the everyday conflict of parties.

Prior had neither distinguished ancestry nor the influence of highly placed relatives to recommend him. How Prior attained success, at a time when the highest advancement was almost impossible without these aids, is a romance which portrays the gay and gifted Dorset in that light in which he loved best to shine. The new envoy to the Bourbon Court, when but a boy, was discovered by Dorset reading Horace in the bar of his uncle's tavern. The Earl, ever tender towards talent in adversity, helped to rescue the young scholar from the London wine-house and to secure the completion of his education, which had been interrupted by his father's death. Dorset's friendship was never afterwards withdrawn, and when Prior, having returned to London from the University, needed once more a helping hand, his noble friend obtained for him the post of Secretary to the Earl of Berkeley, Ambassador at The Hague. So little of the Jacobite did Prior cultivate that he was appointed a gentleman-of-the-bedchamber to King William, and, throughout the latter's reign, continued to enjoy His Majesty's friendship while filling minor diplomatic and State offices.

This was not a record to appeal to ardent lovers of the Royal exile. Prior's instructions were, however, so precise, that his opinions

concerning the war were hardly of consequence, while the delicate question of young James's destiny had no place in his mission. As a basis for formal negotiations at a general peace conference, he was to obtain Louis' recognition of Anne's title to the Crown, and ample security that the Crowns of France and Spain should never be united, proposals which needed but slight discussion, admitting as they did of no diminution.

But if Prior was to keep silence concerning the Prince, it was only because his fate was in hands more sympathetic, hands, too, more powerful to serve him. After Rochester's death, Buckinghamshire, who was the young Prince's brother-in-law, continued the secret negotiations with St. Germains. Buckinghamshire probably cared little on what terms the Prince should return to his own. His was the careless, aristocratic temper of a less brilliant St. John, a cynic in politics, a cynic in religion, a man of the world, always ready to seize for himself the best in life. The traditional Stuart was in some sense akin to this type. Therefore was Buckinghamshire for the Stuarts, and if other reason was wanting, had not his marriage with Catherine Sedley's daughter made him one of the Royal family?

But there was another and a sterner diplomat.

This was the Duke of Hamilton. His Grace was the power behind the Throne and the Government. He and Anne were agreed that at some time, in some way, the Prince of Wales should be restored to his native land. But the time and the way should be of their choice, and, meanwhile, the Prince should behave as the Queen's debtor for her goodwill, a debt which he could never adequately repay!

To His Majesty of St. Germains this condescension was barbed with insult. His advisers were disposed to dictate to the lady whom they regarded as a usurper, rather than to take their orders from her, and from Hamilton, who, if not a renegade to his true allegiance, had at least preferred his comfort to outlawry for the cause. But Hamilton, if imperious, was a shrewd fellow, whose sincerity was not doubted by the statesmen of St. Germains. What vexed them was his dictation. If they would but do as he directed, then every ambition would be fulfilled, his own above all!

The impatience felt at St. Germains was frequently reflected in Parliament, especially in the Lords, where the Jacobite peers voted as required by the Court of "James III.," that His Majesty might enjoy the diversion of embarrassing his too prudent friends in London. To Anne it was gall that her brother's friends in the Peers should

After the picture [illegible]

JOHN SHEFFIELD, AS DUKE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, AND HIS THIRD WIFE,
LADY CATHERINE DARNLEY, HALF-SISTER OF QUEEN ANNE

vote occasionally for the admirers of Marlborough. One of Hamilton's letters to James's Secretary of State, the Earl of Middleton, may be regarded as the echo of many a private conference between him and the Queen. In it the Prince's rights were admitted; the Duke prayed he might be restored, and thought Heaven might accomplish it if he became a Protestant. For his part, he would never fail to give him good advice.

"The possession of the Crown," wrote Hamilton, "has never been the object of the Queen's wishes, nor does she consider it as her property. She looks upon it as a deposit placed in her hands, for which she thinks herself accountable. The Prince's misfortunes affect her sensibly. She laments that they have been brought upon him by imbibing tenets repugnant to his people.

"The country will never receive a king from France, nor will the English suffer themselves to be governed by a Roman Catholic. I would rejoice to see the Prince one day restored, but I declare against having any concern in civil wars. To be plain, you should lose no time in taking him away from France, and not wait until you are compelled by a public or private article in the Treaty. Go with him to a Protestant country, and marry him as soon as possible to a Protestant. I wish you were safe in Sweden."

Some hint that Buckinghamshire took a more generous view than Hamilton might be inferred from a conversation between him and the Queen, from which it would appear that Her Majesty

wanted to convert him to her side. "You know well, my lord," said Anne, "that a Papist cannot wear this Crown in peace. Why has the example of the father no weight with the son? He prefers his religious errors to the Throne of a great kingdom. He must thank himself, therefore, for his exclusion. He knows I love my own family better than any other. All would be easy if he would enter the pale of the Church of England. Advise him to change his religion, my lord, as that only can change the opinion of mankind in his favour."

These, then, were Anne's terms. The Crown for his faith. But in her brother's veins coursed nobler blood. The courage of the Stuarts, the simple faith of Mary Beatrice, were his. But let the youth speak for himself, his own apology, his own glory, in a letter to Her Majesty of England:

"Plain dealing is best in all things, especially in matters of religion, and as I am resolved never to dissemble in religion, so I shall never tempt others to do it; and as I am well satisfied of the truth of my own religion, I shall never look the worse upon any persons because they chance to differ from me, nor shall I refuse in due time and place to hear what they have to say on this subject. But they must not take it ill if I use the same liberty that I allow to others—to adhere to the religion that in conscience I think the best."

It was the Prince's abdication. Afterwards

there were negotiations, intrigues, plots. But the cause was finished. The Prince had chosen his destiny.

To Buckinghamshire that sacrifice for conscience' sake was a sublime jest. What of sacrifice understood the jovial sybarite who had immortalised "Glorianna"? To him it was passing sad that England should cast off the Stuarts, merry fellows all, for a heavy German swashbuckler. But such things would be, and the man who knew how to live was he who bore the fate of others like a Spartan. To Anne it was obstinacy, and she, too, was obstinate, and would not be thwarted by one from whom she expected humble obedience. For by some strange feat of perversity, while she regarded herself in the deep recesses of her soul as a sinner, in the light of day she beheld herself the Chevalier's kindest friend, hindered in her benevolence by his bigotry.

Meanwhile le Mesnager, Comte de St. Jean, had been sent secretly to London to submit to the Queen the preliminary articles of peace. The arrangement of the preliminaries presented little difficulty, save on one point. What did the Queen really desire for her brother? This was the chief object of the Ambassador's quest, and the one above all which was to elude him. Anne wished the most contradictory things.

She would, if she could, do justice to her brother. The Frenchman was charmed. But how? That Her Majesty did not know, could not even guess. Buckinghamshire would be for letting things drift, and moulding meantime the sentiment of the country to the temper which would enforce the return of the Prince. Hamilton would be the king-maker, laying down the terms upon which James might rest assured of prosperity. Masham alone would be for heroic measures.

Can one wonder that Anne was irresolute—that, afraid of being disowned by Parliament and rebuked by the voice of the nation, she did nothing? If only le Mesnager would propose something! But the fate of the Chevalier de St. George was in his sister's hands. Louis had done his best for him. Now he should do his best for France. Throughout the peace negotiations the Duke of Somerset was in the Council, the vigilant foe of the Prince of Wales, the champion of Hanover; for Somerset's talent for quarrelling with everybody had him at daggers drawn with his new colleagues almost as soon as he had been revenged on his old ones. The junto had flattered him with hopes of the reversion of the Crown should the house of Hanover fail. When they had ceased to flatter, Somerset had ceased to

serve. Oxford, however, had no bait sufficiently tempting to keep his Grace in good humour. He had countenanced all the intrigues of the Backstairs to get rid of Godolphin and his Ministry. But no sooner had their downfall been effected than he began to cabal with them. For months he abstained from attending the Council, and when at length he did appear, St. John, with a display of spirit which enraged his Grace, refused to assist in such unwelcome company. Nor did the young Secretary of State content himself with a formal protest. He gave his reasons, and so eloquently, that Somerset retired to make open war upon the Government, of which, however, he still remained a member.

In the Court, Somerset's duchess was a still more dangerous enemy of the exiled Prince. The Duchess's bitterness against Mary Beatrice's son has been attributed to the action of Charles II. in making one of his children Duke of Northumberland, thus elevating him above the line of Percy. If it be so, young James paid dearly for the Merrie Monarch's indiscretion, for the Duchess—cold, logical, reserved, yet in a regal way sweetly condescending—was more than a match for the impulsive, chivalrous, and sentimental Masham. The Duchess had the qualities of a statesman of a certain narrow, aristocratic type. Masham was, above all, a

woman in love with her ideal, and ready to go to the block for it.

As the months rolled on, the influence exercised by the Duchess over the Queen, and the independence displayed by the disappointed Duke, so irritated the Government that ministers urged the Queen to dismiss the former. But Anne was ever firm at the wrong moment, and now she clung tenaciously to a favourite whom she considered, no doubt, a useful shield against the enmity of the Whigs; for the Court could not be held wholly Jacobite while the Mistress of the Robes was one of the most powerful adherents of the opposite party. Moreover, if the Duchess were deposed, her office would be the object of a hundred intrigues, with the consequent risk of some lady utterly distasteful to her being forced into a place near her person, where she could only tolerate a friend. Unity of purpose, therefore, there was none. To Masham the Queen, in despair at her brother's stubbornness, grieved for the misfortunes he courted. To the Duchess of Somerset she was the distracted Queen, suspicious of the machinations of designing Jacobites and disloyal Whigs, and grateful for a Mistress of the Robes whom she could wholly trust.

On September 27 the preliminaries of peace

between France and England were signed in London, and were at once submitted to the allies. The Empire and the States-General were equally adverse to them, and a furious campaign was opened to overthrow the Ministry, a campaign which at one time almost imperilled Anne's Crown. But that was a domestic question with which France had no concern, and le Mesnager prepared to leave the country. One of the chief objects of his sojourn in London remained undetermined. Nothing had been settled as to the Prince's future. Anne wished him well. That was the limit of her friendship. In a private interview at Court between the envoy of Louis and Masham, the lady confessed the despair of the Queen, and indeed her own, as to the prospects of James. The Queen, she pleaded, found it impossible to make peace at all without strengthening the pretensions of the House of Hanover, "a thing," added the lady, "that I am sure is all our aversions." Mrs. Masham went to a cabinet, and from it took a miniature set in diamonds. It was a portrait of the Queen! This, then, was the symbol of Her Majesty's real desires, her own jewelled miniature for the advocate of her brother! On bended knee would le Mesnager receive it. But the lady forbade him. It was to be a token of despair, a tribute to a defeated

cause, a sign of sympathy and of regret rather than of hope. With a few vague words conveying a doubt as to the regal origin of the gift, Mrs. Masham handed it to the French envoy, whose business in England being now ended, took his departure with no better token for St. Germains than this jewelled symbol of Anne's disappointment.

CHAPTER XXXIX

ENGLAND was weary of the game of war. Without the aid of English gold, or English troops, should the Empire and Holland crush France, if still they would pursue the path of vengeance. It was thus they understood the signing of the peace preliminaries at Vienna and The Hague, and great was their rage at the loss of an ally so lavish of men and of treasure.

The Imperial Ambassador in London, Count Gallas, betrayed such chagrin at the new turn of affairs that Queen Anne forbade the haughty diplomatist the Court. The Dutch envoy, Buys, would imitate the arrogance of Vienna, and he too earned the distinction of falling under the Royal ban.

With true English spirit did the Queen thus rebuke the insolence of the foreigner. But pride has its anxieties as well as its triumphs, and the Prime Minister was filled with alarm lest the peace negotiations with France should be interrupted by a war in which England would be opposed to her old allies. The man who, during

this critical period, had to sustain the policy of Queen Anne's Government at The Hague was a gallant soldier, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, who had begun life as a page to Mary Beatrice, and, after the Revolution, entering the army, had fought his way to the highest posts. Anne trusted him, while to the Dutch he had the recommendation of being one of the few Englishmen who had won the admiration of William. The Earl had been so far successful that the States-General had consented to the holding of a Peace Congress, and had fixed Utrecht as its meeting-place.

The assent of the Dutch was, however, forced by circumstances, and was no evidence of a desire to end the war. The support of England withdrawn, they dare not court hostilities with France. The support of the Empire would be theirs, but it was England, not the Empire, which had so far been her shield against the assaults of her martial neighbour.

It soon became apparent that the projected Congress was to be but a mask to conceal the designs of the allies, a ruse to divert attention from their schemes, while they plotted with the vigour of desperation to bring about the downfall of the Tory Administration.

The unfortunate Queen had thought herself Queen indeed when young Beaufort had so

saluted her on being at last free from the Marlboroughs' thrall. But strange was that freedom, for it served but to reveal the full strength of her enemies. It was freedom which permitted her to beat out her life against the walls they had raised round her during the long years of her subjection.

In Holland they spoke openly of another Revolution. In London they whispered of it. In the Palace the word was never mentioned, but the Queen and her friends could not escape from the omens which haunted them during these stormy days. The materials for overthrowing the Throne were all at hand. The Whigs were fired with implacable enmity towards this Royal widow with the demure and gentle manners, who had hurled them from power just when they had consolidated their strength and the best intellect in the land was at their service. Hanover had a Prince to fill the part played by the House of Orange in 1688, and Holland had a fleet to carry His Highness to the shores of the island. In 1688, however, the prospects of an invader were brighter. Then the people held aloof because they regarded James with distrust. They did not hate him, perhaps, but neither did they love him well enough to save him. But Anne was devoted to the Church of England. The mass of the people

regarded her with loyal tenderness not innocent of pity. And if Hanover made no sign, if the fleet of Holland rode idly in the North Sea, it was perhaps because of the hold which the Queen had upon the affections of those grades of society who, though enjoying but a meagre share in the government of the country, would, if once goaded into fighting, never lay down their arms save as victors.

The malcontents were, as usual, of two orders: those who would adhere to political methods, however dark, and those more reckless spirits who would in the last resource plunge the country into civil war.

The Fifth of November was approaching. There could be no better day for appealing to the passions of the populace. It was the festival which celebrated the escape of Englishmen from a great catastrophe at the hands of Englishmen. It would be a happy idea to signalise it with the burning of effigies of two such well-known Britons as the Pope and the devil. There would also be an effigy of the Pretender, and with rather a better reason. If the noble spectacle of Pope, devil, and the Prince of Wales mingling their flames in the streets of London did not excite the populace to a frenzy of enthusiasm for Holland and the Germans, then would the Whig chiefs die of shame for their abandoned country.

But the organisers of these patriotic fireworks thought of yet another expedient to arouse the people to a proper sense of their duty to the allies. Prince Eugene was invited to London. If he should make his entry into the city while the fire was devouring the effigy of his friend the Pope, the multitude would go mad with delight while the Prince laughed in his sleeve.

To the Court of Vienna it appeared that the blunders which had made Gallas displeasing to Anne might be retrieved by Eugene. And he was consequently ordered to repair to St. James's. Meanwhile it would seem that the demonstration was postponed from the fifth to the seventeenth of November, that being the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession to the Crown, and Queen Anne prudently withdrew from the centre of all these preparations to the rural quietude of Hampton Court.

The plot was exposed through the agency of a Jacobite emissary named Plunket, who had been educated in Vienna, and was on terms of friendship with the Secretary to the Imperial Ambassador. Assisted, it is said, by William Penn, the famous Quaker, who was much esteemed by the Queen, Plunket managed to obtain an audience with Oxford, to whom he imparted his secret. The result was that the procession which was to have inflamed the warlike ardour of the

nation was stripped of all its elaborate symbolism.

At midnight a detachment of Grenadiers marched to Angel Court, in Drury Lane, and entered an empty house. There the officers found assembled a brilliant Court of waxen grandees. In the centre was his Satanic Majesty. The place of honour at his right hand was occupied by his Holiness the Pope, while the hardly less distinguished position on his left hand was filled by the Prince of Wales. His Royal Highness was attired in a blue cloth coat with tinsel lace, while his hat was surmounted with a significant white feather. The principal personages were covered by a large canopy, while all around were the figures of Jesuits and Franciscans, brands ready for the burning. The whole paraphernalia was carted away in the small hours to the Cockpit, while immediately the trained bands were summoned to arms.

The Jacobite "Post-boy" boldly charged Somerset, Sunderland, Godolphin, Grafton, Walpole, Halifax, and his brother Montague with having organised a plot to overthrow the Government. It was rumoured at the time that Her Majesty was ill. When the crisis should come rumour would declare her dead. Then would confusion overtake those who loved the Stuarts

but dreaded the son of James II. The partisans of the Prince, unprepared for emergency, would be at the mercy of their enemies. And what would their enemies do? That depended upon Hanover, and Hanover was not in love with wild enterprises. Meanwhile the reply of the Whigs to all these charges was that the procession and the burning of the effigies were but a means to inflame the patriotic ardour of the people, and awaken the nation to the dangers of the proposed peace.

One can see in the perplexities of this situation the opening of the rift which was afterwards to divide Oxford and St. John, to the utter ruin of their party.

Oxford's was not a combative spirit. The successes of politics pleased him, its disappointments stimulated him to fresh efforts in the direction of intrigue or conciliation, for it was by intrigue or conciliation he had won his battles. They were his best-beloved weapons. He had neither talent nor appetite for the employment of others. As a diplomatist he would have been nearly always admirable. But in politics there come seasons of storm when one cannot cajole or trim, when one must fight with set teeth, crushing one's enemies or accepting one's fate with valiant nonchalance. For Oxford that time had come. Against him was leagued

such a junto of talent, such a phalanx of embittered foes, as no Machiavelli could checkmate. The stout heart, the ready wit, the recklessness of the born fighter glorying in the fray, which were St. John's attributes, were the qualities now needed to avert disaster.

In his anxiety, Oxford, instead of trusting to St. John's subtle wit, resorted to his familiar devices. He would compromise. He would divide his enemies. He would purchase the venal, and inflict defeat on the others through the defection of their comrades. The Queen, acting no doubt on the Prime Minister's advice, had private conferences with Marlborough and Godolphin, as well as with Somers, Cowper, and other leading Whigs. She pleaded with them that they would not thwart her hope of restoring peace to her country. One can easily imagine the nature of the arguments she employed to each. To Marlborough and Godolphin office was everything. But it might be possible for the former to retain it, and the latter to recover it, on terms that would be fatal. Somers and Cowper were men of a different type. They were convinced Whigs, who would live and die devoted to their convictions, to which they would sacrifice everything, even the Crown itself. Anne's arguments and appeals were useless, and the

Whig lords remained as resolutely opposed as ever to the desires of her heart.

Though Oxford could not carry any of the Whig leaders with him, though Anne's old friend Nottingham, aggrieved at not having been admitted into the Government on the death of Rochester, entered into alliance with the Opposition, even though Halifax would not throw his weight into the balance in favour of ending the war, nevertheless should Oxford go on.

When during these anxious December days the ardent Jacobite bloods assembled at Arbuthnot's lodgings in St. James's, Sam Masham often had disquieting news to communicate. They heard with consternation that Her Majesty had consulted with the Whig lords. They knew the grievous difficulties of her position. These difficulties made that conference all the more perilous. What if she should again fall under the domination of the Marlborough yoke? They cursed Oxford for his trimming and applauded St. John for his haughty defiance of the enemy. St. John was the man.

One victory the more spirited section of Her Majesty's advisers did achieve. They carried a resolution that Parliament should be assembled at once, and be allowed to debate as it would the question of peace or war.

The Queen was carried in a sedan-chair to

Westminster on December 7, 1711, and opened Parliament with great state. The eyes of the whole country were turned towards St. Stephen's, where issues so vital to the happiness of the people were now to be considered. The Queen, in that thrilling voice of hers, read from the Throne her Speech. Her Majesty promised that the alliance with the Allied States would be continued, and begged of Parliament not to deny to her the glory and satisfaction of obtaining peace for her country. Having concluded her Address the Queen retired, but not to St. James's. What would the Lords do? Her Speech was in the nature of a personal appeal. She had begged of them for just once not to be politicians, but English nobles, the leaders of her chivalry, to grant to her, who had suffered so much, this priceless boon. What would their answer be?

Feverishly she pulled off her State robes in the retiring-room, and returned to her curtained box to await the verdict. Extravagant was the irony of fate that made that helpless woman the mistress of that gallant array of English peers, whose ranks numbered some of the greatest soldiers and politicians of all the ages. Most of them had known her from childhood. They knew her faults and her virtues. And, knowing her as they did, they understood the dread that

oppressed her, crowning her brow as with fire, lest she should fail before all Europe.

Nottingham struck the first blow against her. The war should be pressed on to a finish. It was a strange harangue from the great pillar of the Church. After Nottingham, who had once been her dear friend, what might she not expect from the others? As the debate progressed it grew warmer. Lord Anglesey declared that peace might have been arranged after Ramillies had interested parties not prevented it. Marlborough sprang to his feet. There were here all the materials for a scene of violence, but if Anne felt impelled to flee she made no sign. Anglesey was flushed and tired after a furious ride of thirty miles, the last stage of a rush from Ireland. He had doubtless said more than would have fallen from him had his mood been more deliberate. There was one present who knew all, or was presumed to know all—the Queen, and to her Marlborough appealed.

The great soldier bowed low towards the box where Her Majesty sat, hidden behind the draperies; and thankful was she for the curtains which shielded her from the hundreds of curious eyes turned in her direction in that trying moment.

Marlborough declared that throughout his service he had ever informed Her Majesty and

the Council of all the proposals of peace that had been made. He called upon her to witness that he was ever desirous of an honourable peace. And far from desiring to prolong the war for his personal advantage, he affirmed that he was worn out with service in the field. Ardently he wished for retirement. He had riches, honours, glory heaped upon him by Her Majesty and by Parliament. But one thing remained necessary to his happiness during the brief space of life to which he could look forward. It was repose. But though he desired it so much, yet would he serve Her Majesty while he could crawl along, but to such terms of peace as had been suggested he would never agree.

Shrewsbury's part in this debate was a mysterious one. While the other courtiers vied with one another in breaking a lance for their distracted mistress, he appears to have remained silent. He was not, however, to escape without a hint that Her Majesty could abide open enemies better than excessively prudent friends.

When the Peers voted on Nottingham's hostile motion, the Government was beaten by just over half a dozen votes. Stung by this new mortification, which was due to the alliance of Somerset and Nottingham with the Opposition, Her Majesty turned to go.

"Who will lead your Majesty to your chair?"

inquired Shrewsbury, not unwilling to have the honour thrust upon him.

"The Duke of Somerset," was the reply.

The incident shows the sympathy with which Anne ever regarded Somerset, even when he opposed her. It shows, too, the limits of Mrs. Masham's influence over the Queen. The favourite looked askance upon Somerset from the time of his rebellion against the new Tory administration. To her he was one of the most dangerous enemies of the exiled family, and if she had her way he would be sent to shed his radiance upon his yokels and vassals, to return no more to sow dissension at her mistress's Court.

Yet Anne was so far Sovereign that she retained Somerset's friendship at a time when he was in conflict not only with her favourite and her own most fondly cherished schemes, but was likewise at open war with the Ministry. Her patronage of the Duke may not have been free from alloy. But to be a coward sometimes needs courage, and if Anne was afraid of losing Somerset's goodwill, she only retained it by defying all her friends.

Yet another rebuff from the Lords was in preparation for Her Majesty. The Duke of Hamilton had been the Queen's support during the stress of all the recent changes. Always her close friend, the death of Prince George had

made Anne more than ever dependent upon the self-reliant Scot, so devoted to her House, yet as hostile to reckless enterprises as a woman's faint heart could desire. Keeping in the background, he had nevertheless marked down Marlborough for vengeance when the time should come. And Marlborough knew what he had to expect when Hamilton could strike with safety to himself. One by one had fallen the Whig Ministry, upon whose support the great general's scheme had depended for its success. That was Hamilton's handiwork. And it was he who had calmed Anne's fears when the fall of the Marlborough clique seemed to shake the Throne. Trusting Hamilton, so far as it was possible to trust anybody where there were so many competitors for her ear, Anne had nevertheless found no difficulty in following Oxford's advice. The Duke was as prudent as the Prime Minister, but infinitely more courageous should the omens, in his opinion, warrant courage. Hamilton, like Oxford, could tolerate Somerset, could, if circumstances required it, coquette with such a Whig as Halifax. But he had no vocation for the details of administration. He thought them, perhaps, too vulgar for a Royal Douglas. Anyhow, Oxford managed them admirably. He could ask for no more complaisant instrument.

The reward conferred by the Queen upon

Hamilton for his services was an English Peerage under the title of Duke of Brandon. The jealousy of Marlborough was fired at this signal honour for an implacable foe. Of late Hamilton had enjoyed many victories over his enemies. Now, at the moment of his supreme elation, he found himself robbed of the honour he prized above all.

The Queen's right to create him an English peer was challenged. The contention was devoid of law or of logic. Why should Scottish peers be exceptions to a rule which enabled the Crown to confer the dignity of a peerage upon any subject, however high or low, however worthy or unworthy, without distinction of merit or defect? But the absurdity of the argument did not prevent the Whig lords from regarding it as a grave constitutional problem. Very solemnly the Peers assembled to decide the point, as if they did not know that Hamilton was pledged to destroy Marlborough, and Marlborough to bring down Hamilton's pride, and that Parliament was being used as the arena of a personal encounter.

The debate on the Royal prerogative lasted all day, Anne occupying the while her usual curtained box. It was a very learned discussion, and lest any subtle argument might be overlooked, there was talk of referring the matter to the judges. But as the evening advanced the

light of intellect shone more abundantly, and their lordships had no difficulty in seeing that the Queen had overstepped her prerogative in creating Hamilton Duke of Brandon.

There was swift retaliation. The Lords were chastised through the prerogative they had assailed, the Queen creating twelve new peers. The new creations were necessary if the House of Lords was not to make Oxford's administration impossible. The Queen had for long hesitated to take a step which she might find herself obliged to repeat under circumstances most distasteful to her, should the Whigs again return to power. The vote on the Hamilton patent was, however, a challenge which could not be ignored, and Her Majesty, with a breath, made the Court party supreme in the Lords as well as in the Commons. One of the new nobles was Sam Masham, and the modest beginnings of Abigail Hill, the humble waiting-woman, were merged in the grandeur of Baroness Masham. Abigail was indebted for her coronet to Oxford rather than to the Queen, who had no mind to risk the loss of a faithful friend by making her a great lady. But as yet Oxford had not begun to distrust Abigail, and the chance was too good to be missed of adding to the dignity of his own House by raising his cousin Hill to the peerage.

It was on December 20 that the Peers rebuffed the Queen and slighted Hamilton. The chief agent of that humiliation soon had cause to repent his victory. Within ten days Marlborough was deprived of all his offices, and the great soldier, who might have been dictator, was cast down in dishonour from the giddy eminence where he had maintained of late so precarious a position. It was alleged against him that he had enriched himself by peculation, that he had received large sums of money from the bread contractors to the army in Flanders, and that he had been a party to the deduction of a percentage from the pay of the troops. In her letter to him dispensing with his services, the Queen permitted herself to reproach Marlborough with the treatment she had met with, as well she might. For had Marlborough declared for peace, his word would have silenced opposition. How deeply the Queen's reproach stung him may be inferred from his reply, in which he too complained of ill-treatment.

"I know," he wrote, "I have always endeavoured to serve your Majesty faithfully and well, through a great many undeserved mortifications."

The occasion being favourable for employing the Prince of Wales's name to embarrass the

Queen, he posed as the bitter foe of her brother, and proceeded:

"It is not my opinion only, but the opinion of all mankind, that the friendship of France must needs be destruction to your Majesty; there being in that Court a root of enmity irreconcilable to your Majesty's Government and the religion of these kingdoms."

The Duke signed himself with the greatest duty and submission, "Her Majesty's obedient subject," and sent the letter to Court by his daughter, the Countess of Sunderland. But meantime the Duke had conferred with his friends, including the truculent Gallas, who now saw the last hope vanish of establishing the Austrian dominion in Spain. There was wild talk of the disgraced general mobilising the troops and making the Queen a prisoner. But Marlborough smiled at such folly. It was not thus that Jack Churchill had made his way from the place of penniless page to the dignity of a Duke, laden with honours and riches. For the Queen he could foresee a fate less merciful than the placid retirement of a State prison. Knowing as he did what life was in the Tower, and in St. James's Palace, he would not rescue Anne from the torture of the latter for the repose of the former—unless his plans compelled him to such kindness.

Marlborough's daughters, the Countess of Sunderland and Lady Rialton, had retained their places at Court amidst all the wrangles of their relatives with the Queen. But these ladies were no longer to be moderating influences in the strife between the Palace and their families. They resigned their places in the Royal Household, and the breach was complete between Anne and her earliest friends. And then came a victory as wine to the heart of St. John. The Queen could no longer protect Somerset, and he was deprived of his place in the Ministry he had so long defied.

CHAPTER XL

WHEN, at the beginning of January 1712, Parliament reassembled, in Lords and Commons the Court party was in the ascendant.

In the Lower House it had a majority which rendered it impervious to attack, while the votes of the twelve new peers in the Upper Chamber made the path of the Government comparatively smooth in that quarter, a change of fortune which suggested Wharton's sneer as to whether the newcomers would vote singly or through a foreman.

No fears for its own safety inspired, therefore, the Government with mercy towards Marlborough, and the Commons prosecuted with vigour the charges of fraud levelled against the fallen warrior. Under the leadership of St. John the House declared: "That the taking of several sums of money annually by the Duke of Marlborough from the contractors for furnishing the bread and bread-waggons for the Army in the Low Countries was unwarrantable and illegal." There was a further resolution that the percent-

age deducted from the pay of the troops ought to be accounted for. These resolutions were presented with all due formality to the Queen, who with regal gravity promised to do her part to redress the complaint made by her devoted Commons. And while she promised, Anne must have had before her mind's eye a lively picture of Sarah, maddened by this public affront, treating her circle to a tornado of eloquence.

Prince Eugene's coming, so long postponed, was at length daily expected. This was the master-stroke designed by the Opposition. The appearance of Marlborough's old comrade on so many glorious fields was to act as a charm, reviving the warlike ardour of the nation, and the traditional passion of Englishmen for glory and conquest at the expense of France.

London was in a fever of excitement, one half lest the hero of Savoy should fail them, the other lest he should not, when word went round that he had been captured at sea by the French. The Whigs cursed King Louis for having trapped so noble a prize, and the Tories for having obliged him to brave the perils of the Channel. But Oxford and St. John, in their private devotions, blessed Louis if indeed he should have seized the unwelcome Eugene, for His Highness was the last man desired at the English Court. His business

was to reverse, by means fair or foul, the policy of the Queen's Government, and to secure at any cost the continuance of the war.

With Marlborough to prompt him, they would find him no ordinary diplomatist, but one, on the contrary, who, while acting with all the strength of the Whigs, would enjoy that immunity from attack which the laws of nations accord to a foreign ambassador.

The alarms about Eugene were, however, dispelled when his yacht appeared in the Thames, and then the first news the Imperial Generalissimo heard was the bad news for him that his old comrade-in-arms was in disgrace, that he had lost all his employments, and that a dark cloud rested on his honour.

Eugene was established in Leicester House, Leicester Square, and there he received official visits from the great officers of State, while the Whig lords became his Cabinet Council.

Of his meeting with the fallen soldier, with whom he had so often shared the perils, the anxieties, the excitement, the hardships, the glory of the field, Eugene himself has left a chivalrous little picture worded with soldierly brevity. "Gratitude, esteem, partnership in so many military operations, and pity for a person in disgrace, caused me to throw myself into Marlborough's arms." Thus wrote Eugene of

his first meeting on English soil with his friend of many a stricken field. What if he had grown rich on the blood of the army! What if he had fattened while the soldiers cried for bread, and docked their pay while their women and children in England battled with famine! Was he not, with all his sins, a great soldier, brave as a lion, gentle as a woman, terrible in battle, a genial comrade in camp? Were there not two Marlboroughs, one too vile to beat the drums in the ranks of gallant men, the other the peerless warrior, serene in the wildest turmoil of the field? And it was this latter fellow, so different from the other, whom Eugene loved.

Marlborough and Count Gallas found the Prince an apt student of British politics. His lesson had to be learned quickly, and quickly he learned it. A couple of days after he had settled at Leicester House the Queen received him at St. James's, when he presented a letter from the Emperor, a compliment with which Her Majesty would willingly have dispensed, because the answer should inevitably be a rebuff.

Anne had been Queen but a short time when Charles had paid a flying visit to Windsor, where he was entertained by Her Majesty and Prince George. Then he was but a boy. Now that he filled the Imperial Throne he was only twenty-seven. But there was little hint of the generosity

of youth in the letter which Eugene handed to the Queen, for Charles preferred to fight to the bitter end rather than abate a jot of his pretensions in Spain, never doubting but that the genius to rule two empires adorned him.

Oxford and St. John were present at this audience, where it was the duty of the Imperial representative to frighten the Queen, and the duty of the Queen to disappoint His Highness without offending him. For Oxford it was a tedious ceremony. So far as he was concerned, the plague might take Vienna and its fire-eating general with a commission to make difficulties for him. For St. John it was, however, a comedy perfectly to his taste, giving promise of new victories, because it was in the hour of difficulty his talents shone most brilliantly, revealing by comparison the dulness of his chief. The Queen having read the Emperor's letter, Eugene had the pleasure of receiving in her sweet, thrilling voice a courtly snub.

Anne said she was sorry the state of her health did not permit her to speak with His Highness as often as otherwise she would be glad to do; but that she had ordered Lord Oxford and Mr. St. John to receive his proposals and confer with His Highness as frequently as he should think proper. Eugene understood the sentiment, for had not St. John caused him to be told that

if he had a mind "to divert himself in London, ministers would do their part to entertain him, and be sure to trouble him with no manner of business."

Prince Eugene found London little less exciting than a battlefield. While the great lords in either camp entertained him with lavish hospitality, the opposing factions amongst the mob fought pitched battles around his house, and the Tory press published a history of the remarkable vicissitudes of his mother—Court favourite of one generation and reputed poisoner of another—lest her dutiful son should lack intellectual diversion!

Having quickly mastered the elements of English politics, Eugene advanced himself to the post of supreme chief of the Whig party. It was not for this the party had brought him to England. Somers, Cowper, and the others had thought of him as a tool rather than as a leader. But the swarthy little hero of the House of Savoy coolly proceeded to depose their lordships, and, taking them under his command, sketched with the rapid judgment of one trained to decision on the field the right policy for English Whiggery. . . . There was his friend Marlborough, an incomparable soldier. His men would die for him, or should at least be given a chance of declining to do so. The

Queen was a weak, silly woman, Oxford a mere schemer, and not a brilliant one. St. John . . . he was a fellow of mettle, the match of any of them ; but he was only one, and as yet a young man without the advantage of well-established fame and an army of admirers. He would therefore, while his enemies were so weak, and the chances of success so favourable, resort to arms to overthrow the Tories and restore the Whigs.

This simple plan had one unpardonable flaw. It would make Marlborough master of the kingdom, and Marlborough's colleagues wanted a plan which would make them masters too.

Marlborough, less straightforward than his foreign friend, was, it seems, disposed to make the Government impossible by stirring up riots. The rioters would suffer, but their blood would cry aloud for vengeance. And the nation, aflame for justice, would restore to power the men who had so ingeniously contrived the sacrifice of the innocents.

" No," said Eugene, who seemed to think he was in Flanders, " we must during the night set fire to the city in various places, particularly to the Palace of St. James's. You should, for the purpose, select the night when an officer whom you can depend on is on duty. During the conflagration you should appear in arms,

possess yourself of the Tower, the Bank, the Exchequer; next march to St. James's, seize the Queen, and force her to dissolve the Parliament."

This scheme is said to have been submitted to Somers, Cowper, and Halifax. These astute politicians no doubt laughed in their sleeves, but they understood the need of the hour to be the embarrassment at all costs of Oxford's Government, and were not disposed to damp the enthusiasm of this enterprising ally.

It was tactfully pointed out to the Prince, however, that there were safer roads to success than those illuminated by incendiaries. At the very mention of Hanover the Queen quaked in her shoes. Why should not the terrors associated in Her Majesty's mind with the Electoral Family be employed to break Anne's spirit and reduce her to submission? Eugene seized upon the idea with avidity, and improved upon it. He proposed that the Elector of Hanover should be appointed chief of the Allied Army in Flanders, and that to overawe ministers he should repair to London and lead the Opposition to the peace.

Ingenuous Eugene! A scheme to make the Elector dictator of the realm was not one to Marlborough's fancy. The Duke opposed it with a thousand plausible pretexts. But the

Prince saw through the arguments to the motive which inspired them. Marlborough was playing for his own aggrandisement. A continuance of the war was with him only the means to an end; with Eugene it was everything. And confiding to his English friends a soldier-like opinion of their deficiencies, the Prince settled himself at Leicester House, like the commandant of a besieged citadel, to watch events, and hold himself ready, if occasion should serve, to sally forth and convert a street fight into the first battle of a civil war.

As February 6 approached, the anniversary of Anne's birthday, ominous rumours were the gossip of the town. It was known that the great Whig lords and ladies would not attend the Queen's reception, and their intentions were attributed to causes more sinister than party bitterness. The Queen was reported to be ill; but in the coffee-houses they said her indisposition was only a diplomatic gout, which would serve as an excuse for cancelling the birthday celebrations.

The Cabinet had ample grounds for enjoining on the Queen this State illness. It possessed secret intelligence that the Court was to be the scene of a woeful tragedy. A band of ruffians were, says Charles Hamilton, "to sally forth from a house adjoining the Palace, and, among

others, were to put to death Lord Oxford, Mr. St. John, and the Lord Keeper (Harcourt)."

Ministers, however, resolved to brave the danger, for which they were not unprepared, and Anne's courage was equal to the emergency. On the Queen's birthday the Palace guards were doubled, and troops were stationed in the principal squares. At Leicester House a dashing cavalcade drew rein. It was the cavalry escort which was to convey Prince Eugene to St. James's to offer the Emperor's congratulations to Her Majesty. Never before had His Highness such a guard of honour; for he was in reality their prisoner, with some prospect of being sabred if the storm which had been prophesied should burst.

There is droll evidence that Eugene was not a party to the murder plot spoken of by Charles Hamilton. For this Court festival he had become a dandy, devoting all the resources of his intellect to the adornment of a person by no means engaging. He patronised, as a rule, a tied-up wig; but for the Queen's birthday he arrayed himself in the full-bottomed wig which was the stamp of fashion at Anne's Court. The Prince would hardly have taken such pains to please the Queen had he anticipated a scene of bloodshed in which Her Majesty's life might have been sacrificed, and in which his full-

bottomed wig might have fallen in company with his head.

Prince Eugene had audience of the Queen before the birthday reception began. Her Majesty handed to the gallant soldier a sword valued at about five thousand pounds. It was a Royal bribe. But the Prince was not covetous. What he wanted was not a gorgeous sword to dazzle a Court, but a field in which to employ the blade of far-famed Cremona.

Never did outward signs of pomp and festivity garb misery more real than on that Royal birthday. The unhappy Queen was obliged to exhibit every sign of consideration for the Prince whom she suspected of caballing against her Government—perhaps against her Throne and life. For how could she know that His Highness's wig was an Imperial guarantee of a peaceful birthday? With gracious words she had to invest him with a regal gift. Then, before all the Court, she had to continue the travesty of joy. While noble after noble congratulated her, Oxford was close by, whispering that all was well in the City. The troops were loyal. The Mohawks awed.

Many old friends were there to cheer her with their dauntless smiles. But she too had smiled and smiled when treason was in the air and herself the worst of all the traitors.

Hush! That was artillery. Boom went the guns again, and again, and again. How Anne's heart leaped at the first round fired beneath the Palace walls! And then she remembered it was but the Royal salute because she was forty-eight years old. But still her heart raced wildly on—happy, happy Queen!

When the reception was over, and from her apartment Anne peeped out slyly at the ugly little Prince and the Tory nobility crowding to their carriages, Her Majesty saw something in comical contrast to the tragedy that had haunted her during the preceding hours. It was Lady Wharton bustling about in undress amongst the brilliant throng arrayed in silks, and feathers, shimmering jewels, and glittering swords. This was her ladyship's method of demonstrating the fervour of her Whiggery; but as nature had been ungenerous to her in the gift of beauty, the effect was exquisitely absurd. Real beauties were there, however, dishevelled like Lady Wharton, in grief for their country's shame. These were the ladies of the House of Marlborough, who from a window watched the Court break up, and the Court watched them—in morning wrappers.

In the evening there were bonfires and illuminations and joyous demonstrations in the streets. Nowhere did treason dare to show its

head. Eugene again went to St. James's, when the Court listened to selections from Italian Operas. And when the concert was over he joined the Queen's party at cards. Late into the evening they played at basset, the Queen and her deadly enemy. Never before had she played such a rubber. For there were trumps invisible on which depended the issue of the game which possessed both their hearts. Would her soldiers in the squares outside remain staunch? Would her people roystering in the streets in honour of her birthday shout "God bless the Queen" till the end of the festival? And there was Eugene fingering his cards so carelessly; what were his friends doing, while the precious moments sped past during which there was to have been a Revolution?

At last it was over. The Queen threw down her cards, and rose from the game of make-believe. From Oxford she had the secret signal that all was well. Once more the guard of honour for the Emperor's envoy clattered into the courtyard of St. James's, and the Prince, in safe keeping, rode away to Leicester House through a midnight scene which gave no promise of slaughter.

CHAPTER XLI

THROUGH the gloom of October midnight in the last year of the seventeenth century, a cloaked figure slouched through the shadows to the Royal villa of Sèvres. At his approach the gates swung open, and without challenge there entered one at whose name honest Christians crossed themselves as though he were the devil himself; and if devil he were not, he was at least a devil-worshipper. This night he was come to cast the horoscope of Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon.

The necromancer, according to the legend, was an Italian priest who regularly purchased the favour of the demons by offering to Satan "the black mass." The knowledge of the future thus gained, he had come to barter for Royal gold.

Never did Louis forget that night. The villa was almost deserted save for a few faithful servants who would gladly have dispensed with this proof that the King loved them. As the magician proceeded with his rites and incanta-

tions, terrifying sounds and signs filled the villa. No man could say what it was he heard, none what he saw. It was as though every sense had become distorted, and that all things in the house, living and lifeless, had become possessed. The wizard, among other things, promised the King that he should live happy and prosperous until the day on which he should open a small packet which he handed to him, and into which, on every great festival, he was to plunge a pin.

The years rolled by. If Louis lost battles in Flanders, in Spain the arms of France had set up a French king, and the King was his grandson. The Royal House flourished. His son, his grandsons, his great-grandsons were around him, signs that Heaven had blessed him; and perhaps wondering why, he often looked upon the mysterious packet.

At last the King could endure the mystery no longer. He was growing old. He would dare fate and know the unhallowed secret. He opened the packet given him on that dread night at Sèvres, and, horror of horrors, the mysterious talisman proved to be a consecrated wafer! It was the Corpus Domini which he had again and again desecrated.

The King was demented with grief. Alas! that one of the race of St. Louis should have had traffic with a magician. And then, as had

been prophesied, the luck of the Royal House changed. In February 1712 the same fell disease which had rendered vacant the Imperial Throne carried off Monseigneur the Dauphin. The young Duke of Burgundy, the Chevalier de St. George's good friend, then in his twenty-ninth year, the pride and the hope of France, became Dauphin in his father's stead. But the idol too was cast down within a fortnight, and France mourned again. Burgundy's little five-year-old son, the Duke of Brittany, was now master of a palace where no sound of life was heard save the cries of weeping children.

Master for two weeks! Then once more the doors were flung open wide, and out passed another mourning procession. It was the Duke of Brittany being taken away to rest with his parents. And there remained as the sole hope of France, the sole object of all Louis' love, the heir to all his splendid dreams, the hapless Burgundy's infant boy, the Duke of Anjou.

The legend of Louis and the Italian wizard was probably a Parisian invention, but such a series of afflictions might well be traced to a supernatural visitation on the Royal House. It was a visitation that the English Government had good reason to deplore, and if St. John heard of the evil Italian, crushing would be the curses he would pray upon his head.

The misfortunes of his kindred had made Philip of Spain heir-presumptive to the Crown of France. Whatever advantage Oxford had gained, therefore, through the death of Joseph, and the accession of Charles to the Imperial throne, was altogether lost by the calamities which had fallen upon the House of Bourbon. For while England would not fight to prevent the union of Austria and Spain, she would spend her last shilling, and fire her last shot, to maintain inviolate the Pyrenees.

With renewed heart, therefore, the Whigs opposed the Ministry in Lords and Commons, while at Utrecht the Plenipotentiaries, who had met in January, were discussing the terms of a Treaty which would end the war. Spring passed, and summer too, yet in Flanders no sign could be descried that the long reign of the sword was nearing its close. During the storm and stress of the brief year since the Tories had returned to power, St. John, by his brilliant and courageous leadership in the Commons, by his sagacity and firmness in the Council of the Sovereign, had risen to fame. He had no intellectual peer in England, none perhaps in Europe, and the times, full of strife and perplexity, were just the setting to bring out in perfection the dazzling splendour of his genius. When, at the close of summer, Parliament was prorogued, St. John could almost

dictate the conditions upon which he would serve Oxford. One of them was a peerage, and he became a peer as Viscount Bolingbroke. The new noble was ready to burn his patent when he found that his chief had dared to crown his talents with a dignity a grade lower than his own. But his lordship took a deadlier revenge, and that swiftly, by achieving a diplomatic triumph which, anticipating the conclusion of the formal Treaty, ended hostilities between France and England.

Bolingbroke, impatient that the Congress at Utrecht should have wasted six months in fruitless haggling, resolved to hasten the climax in his own masterly way. He would go to Paris himself, meet face to face the advisers of King Louis, and strike a bargain, for which the wiseacres of Utrecht would, if left to themselves, keep them waiting a generation. Bolingbroke was accompanied to France by Prior and Gaultier, and on reaching Paris on August 17 was established at the Hôtel de Croissy as the guest of de Torcy. The brilliant English Ambassador and his accomplished host solved in a few days the problems which all the opposing marshals and their legions had, during ten years, only obscured and embittered. A suspension of arms was quickly arranged, and Bolingbroke was hailed as the darling of the capital which might

have bred him. The gay, the witty, the fashionable flocked to the Hôtel de Croissy to do him honour, for this dazzling fellow, who dealt out cities and provinces in the Council-chamber as lightly as he did his gold in the town, or compliments in the drawing-room, was a Prince of the Blood in which Paris delighted. Everywhere choice spirits of the noble and gay opened to him their doors, and, unsubdued by responsibility, this Englishman, more Parisian than the Parisians, was quickly the idol worshipped by the whole capital.

A suspension of arms for four months having been arranged, Bolingbroke left Paris to pay his respects to the King at Fontainebleau.

The French Court had reached its devotional era. Louis had done with the world of pleasure and of romance. He was still king of a great nation. But Bolingbroke was king of youth, of strength, of beauty, of intellect—and what would not the Lord of France give to be he? A generation earlier Louis would have eagerly welcomed him as an acquisition to the gayest, the wittiest, the most polished Court in Europe. Now the King was old and broken-hearted, while Bolingbroke was young and untamed, and these two, of spirits so closely akin, met as men who behold life from different ends of a telescope, melting away as it was from the elder, while

upon the younger its pleasures and honours were crowding in all their most satisfying fulness and brightness.

But if the master of Fontainebleau was sad at heart, his heart was not bared to the stranger. And as for the courtiers, gallant and fair, the King's eye was upon them, and each was the other's rival to delight this novel Englishman, whose like had not been seen in France since Buckingham had glittered there.

In the woods of Fontainebleau, where the peerless Fontanges, fated to so brief a reign, had in the old days led the Amazons, Bolingbroke hunted with the Court. Louis could no longer mount a horse, but the beauties of the household were not the less captivating because the King's eyes had grown dim, and that he had to ride in a chaise while they and their cavaliers, superbly mounted, streamed at will over the broad domains, and at will lost their way in the glades, where the birds whispered no secrets.

Every evening there were conferences between the King and Bolingbroke and de Torcy—conferences between men who knew how to keep their own counsel. With Bolingbroke the King and his minister might be frank. But for him there would have been no peace. He was, so far, not only the best friend of England, but the saviour who had brought relief to France when

at her last gasp. At these conferences the future of the Stuarts was doubtless considered, and plans vaguely sketched.

Gradually the minds of the English should be moulded to receive the Prince of Wales. Events should, however, largely depend upon events. But if the Queen lived long enough, it might in time be possible to introduce her brother to the English Court and establish him as heir-apparent. If, however, the Queen should die before the education of the people had been effected, then more than ever would the fate of the House of Stuart lie in the lap of the gods. But whatever might betide, Bolingbroke had made his choice, and would if he could preserve the old dynasty.

Returning to Paris from Fontainebleau, Bolingbroke found the capital existed only to amuse him. "Harré and Robin" were toasts at every table. But Harry readily forgave the mistake, for how could these good people know that he wished every glass of wine might choke Robert! If they did, that, then, would be their toast, for the inimitable "Harré" knew what was best, and to the desire of his heart—black or white—they would drink with vivacity.

Most magnificent of the festivities in honour of the English envoy was the State performance at the Opera House. There one August night "The Cid" was played before the chivalry of

France. Across the chasm of two centuries, straining one's ears, one may hear in dreamy cadenza the trivial gossip of that memorable evening, as it fell from the lips of powdered dames and jewelled seigneurs. Morsels like these :

". . . Parabère the adorable ! where ? . . ."

" Behold there ! . . she of the dazzling beauty in the midst of the Court circle. . . . That is she. . . . Bewitching Parabère ! "

". . . Happy Monsieur le Comte."

" Stupid ! Eyes like those don't make a husband happy. They sparkle for Harré."

For an instant let that theatre, lustrously gay with the rank, the beauty, the genius of eighteenth-century France, scintillate before the mind's eye as it did in bewildering reality on that autumn gala night. Princes of the Blood would be there, but, alas ! not the Dauphin. For we have seen Monseigneur, and Burgundy, and Brittany swept away in a twinkling, like tapers gone out before the breeze ; and little Anjou, heir to France in their stead, slept in his cradle, unconscious of the rout. His uncle, however, the young Duke of Berri, would be there, and the King's nephew, the dark and dissolute Philip of Orleans. With them would be Louis of Bavaria, who had fought throughout the war with France and against his German kindred,

and had paid a bitter price for his scorn of Vienna. And not all there of Royal blood would be of stainless lineage. The Count of Toulouse and the Duke of Maine would recall, for those who knew or cared, the story of Montespan, and pointing to the gallant Berwick, the seniors would tell the youths of a day when happier had it been had Arabella Churchill not gone a-hunting.

Not yet an instant let that picture fade. Around the boxes, whose silken draperies frame smiling beauties and whispering gallants, cast one swift glance. Not to dwell on the lovely Countess Parabère, whose tender heart "Harré" had so swiftly lacerated—she is but a butterfly of history in the line of succession to the Montespans and Fontanges. But follow her covert glances, artist as she is in coquetry. Ah! there is an Englishman yonder with the King's Secretary, de Torcy. In that assembly of nobles, and statesmen, and soldiers of France, and of many another land, there is no mistaking him for anything but an aristocrat of England. It is St. John himself, receiving the homage of Paris with the smiling ease of a king taking his due.

Ever and anon the eyes of a young man of singular grace and sweetness of expression, of noble yet wistful mien, swept the tiers of grandees

and dames, and rested on Bolingbroke. It was an eye of wonder, of curiosity, of appeal, of almost girlish bashfulness, as though he would blush to meet an answering glance. He would give years off his life to read the Englishman's heart; to interpret the scornful challenge of his face in repose, the enigma of his ready, gracious smile, the contradiction of the imperious yet thoughtful brow, and the easy, careless air of the man of fashion. For this swarthy youth, impressed with some strange stamp of tragedy which no gaiety could altogether veil, born to be in some way a sacrifice for the sins of his race, was by birth King James III. of England.

And Bolingbroke was probably not thinking of the exiled Prince at all, but of himself; for what in politics was so attractive, so distinguished, so puzzling, so uncertain as he? And if not of himself and of his schemes, then perhaps of some charmer of Court or salon, some beauty of Fontainebleau or of the Hôtel de Croissy, perhaps of the enchanting Parabère herself, a little before a lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Burgundy, and by-and-by famous as "La Sultane reine" of Philip of Orleans.

Before quitting France, Bolingbroke paid a visit to the Queen-mother at St. Germains, and Mary Beatrice doubtless thanked him for having promised to secure to her, by the Treaty of

Peace, payment of her dower-money from the British Treasury, so sorely needed and so long and so meanly withheld. He afterwards declared that while in Paris he had not seen the Prince, save that night at the opera. Perhaps not. But the Viscount would not permit quixotic regard for truth to embarrass him. Wherever he went amongst the French he should meet the Prince's friends, chief amongst them the King, and if there was no interview with Anne's brother it was doubtless because his affairs were best managed by deputy.

Master of diplomacy, of politics, of love, of duplicity, Bolingbroke finished the Queen's business in France, and returned to London to reap the glory of the peace-maker—glory which was to eclipse Oxford and hasten his downfall. Guiscard had given the Prime Minister an unfair advantage, but that was now redeemed by the laurels won in Paris.

Matthew Prior had been left as Chargé d'Affaires in Paris until the Queen should choose an ambassador. The Duke of Hamilton was given the appointment. He knew her wishes and her fears with regard to her brother, because her wishes and fears were his own. And he was, therefore, the person best qualified to represent her in Paris, where the most delicate problem to be solved was the fate of the Pretender.

When Bolingbroke quitted France the Prince should have at once followed his example. For while he enjoyed the hospitality of the French Queen Anne dare not sign a Treaty of Peace. James did make preparations to leave the country, and going to Chaillot bade his mother a tender adieu. When they should meet again neither could tell, for the youth himself hardly knew where lay his destination. He was, it would seem, disposed to adopt Hamilton's counsel and move to the north of Europe. His entourage, too, was formed, as had been advised, mainly of Protestants, and included a chaplain of the Church of England for the Anglican members of his household. But at Châlons-sur-Marne he learned of a plot against his life; and there James tarried, glad perhaps of an excuse to delay a final farewell to the land of his adoption—a delay, moreover, which might, he hoped, enable him to meet Hamilton on French soil, and hear from the lips of his kinsman the unwritten aspirations of Queen Anne for his destiny.

But never again was Hamilton to cross the seas. His part in the drama of the Stuarts was finished. The call had come for him to the fulfilment of the memorable tragedy in which Fate had assigned him a part.

The marriage which had made Hamilton's fortune as an English grandee wove in the end

his winding-sheet. Hamilton and Baron Mohun, one of the best-known Whigs at Anne's Court, had both married into the noble and wealthy house of Gerard. The former had entered into a verbal agreement to pay a thousand a year to Lord Macclesfield, his wife's brother, and had faithfully kept his word during the lifetime of the latter. On the death of Macclesfield the bold Mohun claimed the reversion of the annuity. The Duke repudiated the claim. But Mohun, the most notorious bully and duellist of the day, was not easily rebuffed. Raking, dancing, fencing, and music beguiled his lordship's lighter hours. There were darker deeds for darker hours, as constables and watchmen could tell. Twice had he been a party to murder. The beautiful Mrs. Bracegirdle, in her youth the adored of the young bloods of the aristocracy, had the misfortune to attract his admiration. Mountford, the actor, interfered, however, to protect her from the rake's attentions. Mountford's devotion cost him his life, for one night he was unlucky enough to encounter Mohun and a companion, and was stabbed to death. Mohun's peers were, however, satisfied of his innocence, and he went free. Again he was implicated in a charge of murder, and once again he was acquitted. This noble, whose innocence of blood had to be twice vouched for by the House of

Lords, had, owing to his rakish life, been separated from his wife.

But that coveted thousand a year was worth fighting for, though his lady might not live with him to enjoy it. He therefore brought a suit in Chancery, in the course of which there was a slight altercation between him and Hamilton. So trifling was it that both had seemingly forgotten it when the Court adjourned. But others had a keener appreciation of the possibilities of these hot words thoughtlessly uttered. It is said that Mohun was prevailed upon by his friends at Marlborough House to send a challenge to Hamilton. The battered Whig rake had had enough of blood; moreover he was the offending party, and to challenge a man who had done him no injury was a piece of impudence, at first sight, too highly spiced even for a stomach so seasoned. But at length he yielded, and a meeting was arranged.

One Sunday morning, therefore, in the middle of December 1712, while London slept, a chariot rolled out of the town through Hyde Park to Kensington. Its occupants were two gentlemen whose countenances denoted that stern business was afoot. The carriage drew up at an open space, encircled by a thicket, close by the western end of the Serpentine—then a neglected rivulet. Two men were already on the ground, like

the newcomers, carrying swords, and no one acquainted with the manners of the day and the quality of those early birds could doubt why they took the air in the country.

It was to throw a dice with death, and this patch of green, sheltered from the eyes of strolling keepers, was a favourite rendezvous.

Very civil were the greetings that passed, too civil for friendliness.

"I hope I am time enough," said one of the last arrivals, addressing the other two, neither of whom, to judge by their swollen eyes and haggard countenances, might have known what sleep was for a night or two.

The speaker was Queen Anne's new ambassador to the Court of France, her kinsman the Duke of Hamilton.

"In very good time, my lord," replied a rough, soldierly man, Lord Mohun's second, whose blunt and rather aggressive air imparted to the words a peculiar sting.

This truculent veteran was General Macartney, a middle-aged Ulster man, who had fought his way to distinction in the Low Countries and in Spain. But less adapted to the ways of peace than of war, his conduct, while intoxicated, towards an aged lady had caused the Queen to withdraw his commission.

While the gentlemen passed to the glade

From a mezzotint, by J. Faber, after the picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

CHARLES, LORD MOHUN.

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where such work as theirs was done, the conversation proceeded.

"Sir," said the Duke, probably irritated by Macartney's tone, "you are the cause of this, let the event be what it will."

"My lord," answered the General with sinister ambiguity, "I had a commission for it!"

And with that the duelling-ground was reached. Mohun had been strangely silent. Ever ready with his tongue, the chill of the grey November morning was in his heart, and he had no spirit left for his customary bravado. It often happened on such occasions that the seconds drew upon each other to keep their principals company. In allusion to this Mohun spoke for the first time, and, strangest of all, spoke as the man of peace.

"These gentlemen," he said, glancing towards Macartney and the Duke's second, Colonel Hamilton, of the Scots Guards, "will have nothing to do here."

But the Irishman would not be an idle onlooker at such sport.

"We will have our share!" he exclaimed.

"Then," retorted the Duke, "here is my friend; he will take his share in the dance!"

They all looked at Colonel Hamilton. He was wearing a mourning-sword! So hurried had been the summons to him on this errand that he had forgotten to arm himself before leaving his

lodgings, and a servant ordered by the Duke to fetch a sword had brought that which came first to his hand.

But the duel was opened—the Duke and Mohun, Hamilton and Macartney. The air was raw and damp. But on this patch of green, curtained by the naked trees, there was the fire of arch-devilry. Colonel Hamilton was perhaps the only one who plied his blade with cold dexterity. The Duke and Mohun thrust at each other like cut-throats. There was no parrying, no feint, none of the sword-play of accomplished fencers.

Macartney, with one deft lunge, was disarmed by his antagonist, who then turned to see how it fared with the head of his House. Mohun lay prone upon the earth, above him the Duke. The Colonel rushed to his kinsman, and Macartney to Mohun, who was writhing in the agony of death. Hamilton likewise was beyond all aid, and in a few seconds he lay dead by the corpse of his foe.

Thus by the steel of a stranger was poor Barbara Fitzroy, long forgotten in her distant grave, avenged, and the tragedy of the Convent of Pontoise completed with grim poetry in the glades of Kensington.

The news of Hamilton's death spread consternation in the town, and Macartney fled the

country, a price on his head, for it was said that in rushing to Mohun's assistance he had inflicted on the Duke his death-wound. Marlborough was accused of having urged Mohun to send the challenge, and the wildest stories, imputing the affair to a Whig plot, were coined. To such a pitch was public feeling aroused that Marlborough asked permission to leave the country. His petition was the occasion of a wrangle in the Cabinet between Oxford and Bolingbroke, the former supporting the Duke's request, the latter, for reasons deeper than his colleagues could altogether appreciate, opposing it. Oxford carried the day, and the fallen soldier, accompanied by his Duchess, retired to Antwerp.

CHAPTER XLII

THE long-prayed-for peace was formally established at the close of March 1713, with the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht. But Utrecht, alas! brought Anne no peace. No longer did the periodical message of slaughter in Flanders come to torture her. But though the guns were silenced, the sword sheathed, envy and malice, ambition and pride, remained to wage round her their ceaseless conflict, and harass into her grave the unfortunate Queen.

The Rock of Gibraltar, and a pledge that the Crowns of France and Spain should never be united, were, in the main, all that England had gained from a decade of victory—together with immortal glory for her soldiers. But the Court warfare, which blazed forth into fierce conflagration when hostilities had ended abroad, was barren of advantage for England, barren of honour and glory for courtiers or statesmen, and when at last peace was enforced, it was at Kensington Palace above the Sovereign's bier.

The Throne of Spain had been the pawn in the Ten Years War. But James Stuart was the pawn in the deadly strife which henceforth raged between the Court factions, not because they loved him, save here and there a simple loyal heart, but because they saw the Queen dying before their eyes, and would shape the future of England and of the Prince to their own good pleasure. And meanwhile James was farther than ever from his country, awaiting in Lorraine the decree of Fate. For France had banished him, as she should if peace there was to be with England, though long ago she had adopted him as her son, had sent him to fight beneath her banner, had saluted him as king. Refuge, therefore, there could no longer be at St. Germains for a disowned monarch. He had neither kingdom, home, nor comrades. He was alone.

And in London the Royal exile's sister on her Throne was still more desolate, more miserable than he. With Hamilton had fallen the last friend whom she had trusted as well as loved. He was a prince indeed, and a true cousin to her, and in the array of nobles around her competing for her favour there was none that could ever take his place, for they were but partisans battling each for his own supremacy, while he was one of the Royal Family. Buckinghamshire

was faithful enough, but he was too old, too spiritless now. Ormonde was as loyal as her old lover, but he was not a statesman, hardly a politician, nothing more, indeed, than a gentleman whose courage and chivalry were unequal either to opportunity or reputation.

There were others, honest men and clever ones, but Anne could not summon whom she would to be her Prime Minister, and bid the nation be his strength against all comers. There were but Oxford and Bolingbroke between whom the Queen might choose. They were the opposing chiefs of the factions who sought to rule Court and country, and on the day of her surrender to one, the other would become her sworn enemy, and the enemy of her House!

Anne, perhaps, had reached the stage of disappointment when from politicians she expected little of affection. If ever a queen had been taught in a hard school the philosophy of resignation, it was assuredly she. But in proportion as she grew indifferent to her own lot, her solicitude for her brother increased, and though her acts during the last year of her life were marked by indecision, though what she wished to-day she sometimes repudiated to-morrow, though she posed to the country as the docile instrument of its will, whatever that will might be, yet there can be little doubt that the consuming desire of

her heart towards the close of her life was for her brother's restoration.

How that restoration could be accomplished she could not imagine, for never would she consent to impose the Prince upon the country by force of arms. But though she saw no way to the accomplishment of her wishes, and though State reasons sometimes obliged her to oppose them, they nevertheless were cherished by her to the end, deciding her part in the strife which agitated Court and Council, and finally leading to Oxford's downfall.

Day by day, as the summer advanced, the conviction grew upon Oxford that his successor was already a-knocking for admission. The record of his ministry since its birth was one of victory—but victory for his young rival. He was beaten, and by Bolingbroke. But in his own artful fashion he would go on contesting the field, for, though knowing his own powers, he knew that he was outmatched; the tide of battle was as yet by no means clear to the eyes of observers. The majority of the party still believed in Oxford, for he, too, had had great victories—and that not so long ago; had fought with dragons and worsted them.

When the Whigs were at the summit of success he had contrived to send them toppling from power, had built up a powerful Tory

ministry, had replenished the Treasury, had employed the Queen's prerogative to tame the Lords. And having done all these things in his deliberate way, studying to avoid rather than to brave risks, he found himself confronted by this question of the succession to the Throne, and, true to himself, he would touch it with superlative craft and caution. He would play with the Court, play with the Pretender, play with Hanover. If only the nation were willing to receive the unfortunate exile! Perhaps it would, by-and-by. If only the Whigs could be induced to make terms! Perhaps even that was not impossible. Above all, if only James himself were more pliant!

In these pious aspirations there was nothing heroic, and Lady Masham had not far to seek for one very different from this plain, dull cousin of hers—a fellow with enterprise shining on his handsome brow, and reckless courage expressed in his every movement—the fascinating St. John.

Bolingbroke was idealised by Lady Masham into a champion who would risk all for the Cause, —would, indeed, risk all for any cause in which it pleased him to enlist! This was what the Tory wits—or at least some of them—said when they debated the burning issues of the day at Arbuthnot's lodgings. And what the wits said

at night over their glasses and their pipes, Lady Masham repeated next morning when the Queen turned for relief from cares of State to the gossip of her devoted favourite. Anne doubtless hoped that what Masham said was true. Bolingbroke was the most brilliant statesman she possessed, with never a stain upon his Tory shield. Where Oxford would trim he would remain staunch, and win his battle, if won that battle could be by any man in England. Assuredly he was the chief to be desired for a forlorn Tory hope; and the forlorn Tory hope was her brother! Therefore was the Queen for him, as against Oxford the semi-Whig; and while yet the semblance of rank remained to him the Prime Minister's power was extinguished, and his fate in a measure that which he had himself meted out to Godolphin.

Whither Bolingbroke's mastery was to lead in the end only Bolingbroke knew—that is, if a man of genius ever knows. The Jacobite zealots in believing him ready to consecrate his life and talents to the Pretender's cause deceived themselves, and mayhap the Queen. Bolingbroke was for one greater than the Queen's brother—He was for Bolingbroke! But though the Secretary had reached that stage in his career when his great gifts were universally recognised, his party generally were not eager to submit

to his yoke. To some he had the fault of youth. To others it was no recommendation that he was the Court favourite. To others his impetuous spirit was a cause of anxiety. Others, again, had personal claims which they feared he would not admit, and so on, in a hundred ways, he was thwarted in his advance to the foremost place.

A brave show could not be expected from a party whose leader had to tread his way as it were amongst mines. And the session of 1713 was without honour for the Government which had bestowed upon the nation the Treaty of Utrecht. The Whigs made fine sport with Queen and Ministry. Her Majesty wished that the Pretender in his retreat at Lorraine might be forgotten. Oxford wished it for his own ends, Bolingbroke for his. But the Whig lords could not forgo the diversion of harrying the Queen and of forcing the rival ministers to half-reveal and half-conceal their colours.

A motion was carried in the Lords protesting against the Pretender being received by the Duke of Lorraine. Oxford opposed it, but the Whigs desired to drive the Prince to Papal territory, where Lord Peterborough thought an education begun in Paris might be naturally improved. Anne in reply humbly assured their lordships that she would renew her efforts "to have that person removed," and in conclusion

ventured on an admonition that the Protestant succession would be best secured by curing their own animosities. Thus was the Queen obliged by Parliament to pursue her unfortunate brother from asylum to asylum, and urge his host to turn him adrift upon the world. But the Duke of Lorraine had private reasons for the belief that Anne was on this occasion the unwilling instrument of vindictive faction, and very welcome to Her Majesty was the dignified reply in which he defended his hospitality, and in admiring periods paid homage to the princely character of the Chevalier.

But before that eulogy reached London Parliament had been prorogued. The Queen's Speech breathed resentment against the Opposition for the manner in which they had received the peace. "There are some," declared the Queen, "who will never be satisfied with any Government. It is necessary, therefore, that you show your love to your country by exerting yourself to obviate the malice of the ill-minded, and to undeceive the deluded. Nothing can establish peace at home, nothing can recover the disorders that have happened during so long a war, but a steady adhering to the Constitution in Church and State. Such as are true to these principles are only to be relied on, and as they have the best title to my favour, so you may

depend upon my having no interest or aim but your advantage and the securing of our religion and liberty. I hope, for the quiet of these nations and the universal good, that I shall next winter meet my Parliament resolved to act upon the same principles."

Poor heart-broken Anne! What she really hoped was that when Parliament re-assembled it would cease to harass her about the wanderer at Lorraine or the heir-expectant at Hanover. If only they would all slumber awhile, and leave her to act unmolested like the queen in a fairy legend! Then, on awakening, would they behold such marvels as would make them doubt their wits, for England would have a Prince of Wales once more, and he—the outcast!

The thanksgiving at St. Paul's for the peace was fixed for the day following the prorogation of Parliament. But Anne had paid her last State visit to the City, and the service at the Cathedral was not graced by the stricken lady who had made it possible. For stricken Anne was. And the public knew it now; for had her strength been equal to her desires she would not, they knew, have been absent on an occasion that gave greater delight to her than to any one else in her kingdom. Before the Queen left London there was an investiture of Knights of the Garter at Kensington. Amongst the favoured ones was

Oxford, and Bolingbroke had one more reason for bringing his chief to the dust.

Ever resourceful and audacious, the discontented Secretary devised a plan which, if successful, would throw the whole body of his open enemies and his envious friends into confusion. It was a plan to drive Oxford frantic. He would have for his ally the great Marlborough. Without a shred of honour left, the Duke was still the most powerful politician amongst the Opposition, still the first soldier in the world, his presence a pledge of victory in field or council.

With Marlborough as his colleague the House of Lords would be his to command like his own household. And that he could contrive a policy which would make him equally dominant in the Commons Bolingbroke had no doubt. He asked but the chance, and there was nothing possible in English politics which he might not perform. The naïve Masham, spinning schemes in which this man was to respond to the string which she would pull, little did she dream that he was a sprightly Richelieu, or a Cromwell of a kind, who would rule England somehow, or in sheer devilry ruin himself.

With Marlborough he therefore opened correspondence; and the Duke, ever ready to serve or to betray, entered with the spirit of the

irretrievable schemer into his plans. After the death of his son Marlborough seems to have centred his affections largely upon Bolingbroke. And now he welcomed some sign that his redemption was to be accomplished through the agency of his *protégé*. As regards the object of the alliance, it probably gave him little thought. His only policy, his only principle, in the autumn, as in the spring of his life, was to be on the winning side. What that side would be he could not tell. Things had now reached such a pass that no man could tell. But there was little fear that fortune would catch Marlborough nodding. To the Pretender he sent a message to the effect—

"That he would rather cut off his own head than oppose the views he had on the Throne.

"He declared that, provided he himself could be rendered secure, he would not hesitate a moment to use all his credit publicly and privately for his service."

James, however, had learned by this time what value to attach to such professions, which, however, were doubtless meant less to influence him than to conciliate the Queen and purchase the friendship of Masham; for there was little passed at Bar le Duc which was not promptly reported at the English Court, and indeed at Hanover.

Anne, however, was done with the Marlboroughs for ever. No promise of service to her family, no promise of advantage to herself, could ever alter her feelings towards them. When Bolingbroke thought the time had come to propose the Duke's recall to England, the Queen instantly took fright. Marlborough and Bolingbroke! That was an alliance she had not bargained for. When the Secretary made that proposal, Anne—whatever opinion she had hitherto held—must have realised that he was no peerless standard-bearer who was prepared to stake his all on the success of the Jacobite cause—that Masham's idol had indeed feet of clay.

It was not to restore the Prince he would have Marlborough back, but that with his aid he might the more swiftly overthrow Oxford, and achieve the inheritance to which he believed his talents were the best title-deeds in England. But Anne would not have the Marlboroughs back if Bolingbroke were never to be Prime Minister. She had had enough of their thrall. If she was tired of her life, it was because it had taken weary years to shake off their yoke. She would not, with her eyes open, begin that struggle all over again; and Marlborough revenged himself, and justified the Queen's firmness, by urging Hanover to take decisive steps to ensure the exclusion of the Pretender.

The prorogation of Parliament had been followed by its dissolution. The future of England depended on the new elections. But the electors did not know: how could they? The battle was to some extent in favour of the Whigs. But more important than their numbers was their unity of purpose. Under leaders of signal ability, and almost malevolent determination, they had but one aim, while the Tories were divided between those who would dictate terms to the Pretender and those who were for the Stuarts, cost what it might.

But weakness greater still arose from the insincerity of their chiefs, for there was no Prince whom Oxford would not serve; and Bolingbroke was only more brilliant, more reckless, more imperious than the Lord Treasurer, not more loyal. And now everything was ready for the march to the precipice, over which the statesmen controlling affairs might be dashed to ruin. But nevertheless the cautious Oxford, brave in his own dogged way, would not seek safety in flight. He had his Garter and his earldom, but still he was ready to hazard his hardly won honours and his head, if needs be, for a marquisate or a dukedom.

CHAPTER XLIII

ONE dark December morning of 1713 news reached London from Windsor that the Queen was lying dangerously ill. It was a warning to the nation that the intriguers were killing Her Majesty, that the Crown which had been lent her was crushing its custodian into the grave. Immediately the old familiar rumour was started that the French were preparing to invade the island, that their warships were swinging to their anchors, only awaiting a favourable wind. It was an ancient lie. The French had nothing better for the service of the Pretender than wise counsel. But none the less, panic seized the people ; for who could tell what was in store for the land ? And men rushed to the goldsmiths and the Bank to secure their treasure before the soldiers of Louis should arrive to loot the capital.

The Queen had been living so retired a life at Windsor that there was no check upon the wildest conjectures. Her Majesty might be dead, for aught any one knew to the contrary.

And if the Queen were dead the Prince of Wales himself might be master at the Castle. For were not the handful of faithful friends by whom the Sovereign was surrounded his devoted adherents? There is a tradition that during the last months of the Queen's life the Prince did pay a flying visit to England. Had he indeed during these lonely December days penetrated to Windsor, a gloomy prospect would have been unfolded for one who aspired to wear the British Crown. Amidst desolate magnificence would James have found his sister sinking into the grave, her only friend the waiting-woman, whom rank and fortune had left unspoiled. For distraction there were cards and music, and that was all—so different from the Windsor where long ago she had fallen in love with Mulgrave, while the beaux and belles of the Court of Charles watched the sport and made merry over her daring, and merrier over her chastisement. In the heyday, too, of youth and success she had gone there after her coronation, and Charles of Austria, now Emperor, had come to be her guest, a foreshadowing of glories worthy of those ancient halls, never, alas! fulfilled. She had had her day, one long day of warfare; and as it faded into the gloaming there was still the din of strife, come so near that it raged around her very walls. During this illness, which came to her as a warning to set her house

in order, Anne may have made her will. When she died a packet was found beneath her pillow. It was perhaps the precious document which enshrined her wishes. But its only influence upon the destiny of England was the slender column of smoke which ascended from the grate of the Council Chamber as the regents solemnly burnt to ashes its unrecorded message.

Anne recovered slowly. It was indeed a reprieve rather than a recovery. Her illness had been a warning to Tories and Jacobites and Whigs that the climax was approaching, and had but added fresh fuel to the fires of partisan strife. Oxford, conscious that by force of intellect he could not hope to withstand his great rival, resolved to prepare for the opening of Parliament by an alliance which would paralyse Bolingbroke. Just as Godolphin had tried to save himself by calling in the Whigs, by calling in anybody whose help meant safety, whose opposition meant disaster, so would Oxford do now. But for Godolphin there came a time when his alliance was not worth accepting. It had now come for Oxford. He made overtures to the Whigs to form a Coalition Government. But Somers, Cowper, Halifax and their friends saw plainly what was coming, and would not bind themselves to a Ministry which at the appointed hour would speak in two voices. They

were for Hanover, while Oxford, whose ruin they were invited to avert, would be the first to bend the knee to James were he restored to his rights.

The Lord Treasurer's efforts to save himself through the Whigs only assured his downfall. Anne could not forgive this parleying with the relentless enemies of her brother. It was, moreover, a confession of weakness in the trial of strength with Bolingbroke ; and to confess weakness in the presence of such an opponent was to ensure defeat. There were eager lips to whisper to the Queen that Bolingbroke, whatever his faults, had never sacrificed his Toryism for the sake of office. He had driven Somerset from the Cabinet. He had defied, and still defied, the Emperor, who continued to wage war against France, but whatever the odds against him, he had never skulked to the camp of the enemy to whine for support. What if he had invited Marlborough back to England! It was because he was not afraid even of Marlborough, whose first faith, if ever he had one, was Tory too.

And thus it came about that Oxford, instead of finding himself at the head of a powerful Coalition, had the mortification of seeing the Ministry recast in a mould that tended to the Jacobite stamp. Benson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was made a peer and sent as Ambassador to Spain, and Bolingbroke's friend,

Wyndham, was promoted to his place. Dr. Robinson, who had represented Queen Anne's Government at the Utrecht negotiations, the last of the statesmen-bishops, surrendered the Privy Seal on his appointment to the See of London, and the Earl of Dartmouth, one of Her Majesty's oldest friends, succeeded to the office. The Earl of Mar, who in little more than a year was to draw the sword for the exiled Prince, was appointed to the Secretaryship of State thus rendered vacant, and Bromley became War Minister. Shrewsbury was content to be Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, for Dublin was a species of backwater in politics where one might watch the turbulent currents of the pool without, and choose one's own time for an adventure.

The Queen was still too ill to come to town when Parliament opened in February 1714. She would have been well pleased, perhaps, never to have seen London again. Politics had become one exquisite torture. The two sections of the Cabinet were at deadly feud, and, to crown her misery, the Electoral Prince might reach England any day to take his seat in the Lords as Duke of Cambridge. In the midst of strife and apprehensions, Oxford sent his brother to Hanover with professions of his devotion. But the envoy was received with coldness. The Elector

apparently understood the Lord Treasurer's position, and deemed he paid his court too late.

The Queen, agitated with a thousand doubts and fears, received from Bar Le Duc a message which ought to have thrilled her with pride—a message which no other Prince in Europe save James Stuart would have penned. It was his profession of faith—brave, candid, simple—one of the manliest deeds his race can boast. He repeated that whatever happened he would adhere to the religion which he believed to be right. If England would not allow him liberty of conscience then she should choose another king. As every Protestant gentleman confessed, it was the bold declaration of one who was every inch a prince, one they were proud to call an Englishman, and whose immortal renown it would be that for the Crown of the Three Kingdoms he would not tell a lie.

But Anne was not cast in heroic mould. She knew that however England might applaud her brother's candour, it was not thus she chose her kings. When, therefore, she addressed Parliament in March, Her Majesty publicly rebuked those who insinuated that the Protestant succession in the House of Hanover was in danger. Her Majesty's speech was more than a rebuke to the Whigs. It was a warning to her brother that if he would be King of England he should

hasten to enter the Church of the nation. But to that warning the Prince was deaf, and Anne waited in vain for some sign of submission.

While the friends of Hanover extracted what pleasure they could from the Queen's words, her Government took strange measures to prove their sincerity. The Duke of Argyle and the Earl of Stair, two staunch Whigs, were removed from their military commands. Tories were put in their places, and Hanover beheld the Army officered largely by Jacobites, with the best-known Jacobite of all, the Duke of Ormonde, as Commander-in-Chief.

This was a challenge in flat contradiction to the Queen's words. If Her Majesty and her ministers were for the Protestant succession, it was passing strange that only friends of Prince James should be entrusted with important commands. Hanover preferred to judge of the situation by deeds rather than words, and plans for invading the island, should the worst come, were considered. Meanwhile the Whigs and the Hanoverian minister in London continued to urge on the Elector to send Prince George to assume the place of heir-apparent at the British Court. But Anne's hand would wither before inviting her German cousin to her Court; on the contrary, she wrote to the Elector and the Electoral Prince imploring of them not to

acquiesce in the proposals of the Opposition, which would, she said, incur the risk of civil war. To their friends in England the Electoral family sent the Queen's letters, and Her Majesty, thus betrayed, soon saw them printed in London.

Oxford, dreading a rupture between the two Courts, wrote to Hanover that—

"Lady Masham was strenuous for the Protestant line, and that he was sure the Queen inclined to the same side. He therefore gave it as his opinion that nothing could endanger the succession but the sending over of any prince of the Electoral family without Her Majesty's consent."

This was in April. Oxford, when writing, still hoped that all was not lost—to himself. But within a month he had cause to change his opinion. What had happened in the meantime between him and the Queen is easily surmised. Enraged against Hanover, the Queen would punish a statesman who was desirous merely of standing well with her during her lifetime, and with her successor at her death, whether he came from Hanover or Lorraine. Oxford felt that he was found out. He could not hope to retrieve his position by rushing into the arms of the Jacobites. His only hope lay in the opposite camp. He therefore wrote to the Electoral House that—

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller in the National Portrait Gallery.

ROBERT HARLEY, EARL OF OXFORD AND MORTIMER, K.G.

p. 712.

"He was apprehensive of his own speedy disgrace; that he had been desired to enter into the views of the Pretender, and that he found the Queen more determined than ever to strengthen the interests of her brother, and to secure the Throne for him."

It was soon discovered that some Irish officers were enlisting men to help the exiled Prince. The Whigs laid the matter before Oxford, and now the mysterious Shrewsbury gave the first hint of how he would act in the coming crisis. He sided with Oxford, and a proclamation was issued putting a price of five thousand pounds upon the Prince's head.

Though Oxford knew in May that he had definitely lost the Queen's favour, he was in no haste to offer her his Staff. He would not go until he was driven out by the victorious faction. On August 7 the long-expected blow fell. The old man was vanquished, and the young man enjoyed the triumph to which he was born. But in achieving his master-stroke Bolingbroke effected his own ruin, assured the ruin of the Stuarts, and laid the Queen upon her death-bed.

If Bolingbroke had the ear of Her Majesty, and the support of the extreme Jacobites like Harcourt, Wyndham, and Ormonde, the majority of the Council were faithful to their old chief, rather than to the youthful Secretary, beneath

the shadow of whose genius they would suffer complete eclipse. Very matronly were the reasons Anne gave for dismissing Oxford. Amongst them there was indeed hidden away a hint, but only a hint, as to the real cause of her displeasure. He was too subtle. That is to say, he was too tender towards the Electoral House. She declared—

"He neglected all business. He was seldom to be understood. When he did explain himself she could not depend upon the truth of what he said. He never came to her at the time she appointed. He often came drunk. Lastly, to crown all, he behaved himself towards her with bad manners, indecency, and disrespect."

Late in the evening on the day of Oxford's disgrace a Cabinet Council was held at Kensington, over which the unhappy Queen presided. Who would succeed Oxford? That was the question. The factions railed at each other, indifferent to the presence of the broken woman, haggard and bowed with illness, who heard in silence. Hour after hour the contention lasted. Insult was met with insult, threat with threat. There were taunts and reproaches, and while they stormed the clocks struck midnight. But still the clamour raged. To Bolingbroke the chance of his life had come, and for all of them he was a match in a contest of wits, their match in spirit and endurance.

The summer night wore on. But night and day were the same to the reckless genius who dominated the board, unconscious that his Royal Mistress was dying before his eyes. The clock chimed one . . . then two. The Queen's eyes were bent imploringly upon them. If only they would desist. Alas for peace! But what cared they? She had sinned, let her suffer. Then the room faded from her vision. The angry faces, the angry voices, were far away. And Anne lay in a swoon at the feet of her unruly councillors.

That same evening, while the shadows gathered in Kensington Palace, draping the Royal apartments with quaint tapestries of gloom, a lady crept slowly and painfully towards the presence-chamber, groping her way by the panelled walls. It was dark, very dark for an August evening, and the figure, tottering at every step, seemed to be that of a woman too old and infirm to wander alone through the deserted galleries.

Like one who durst not disobey, she struggled along foot by foot, through the lonely passages, pressing her hand to her eyes as though she would dispel the darkness, gathering round her in clouds too dense for the soft twilight of the summer evening. At last she reached the presence-chamber, and stood before the clock studying its face, blurred and dim to her failing sight.

The moonlight streaming through the casement fell upon her profile. The face was ashen. Something rested upon it which, once seen, was unforgetable; something for which there is no name—the stamp of death. Like one half-blind, half-dazed, half-demented, she gazed upon the clock. Vacantly she stared, questioning minute by minute the hands she could not comprehend. Then a door opened, and a lady-in-waiting entered. The lonely, weird figure turned towards the intruder, and now the pale light fell full upon her face. It was the Queen! . . .

The interruption recalled the hapless, hunted lady to herself. What had she come thither for? What did the clock say? It had summoned her! It had delivered its message there to her in the shadows, and now it had escaped her again! . . .

Gentle hands carried the Queen to her bedchamber to die.

Through the time that remained to her she lived in the fantastic world between delirium and reality, in which the heart speaks its tenderest secrets, but speaks them, alas! in vain.

She talked to the living who were absent beyond the seas—whom she alone could see. She shuddered at the wraiths visible only to the poor soul trembling in the world between.

There came to her bedside the babe of St.

James's Palace, grown to manhood! The victim of the warming-pan! The hunted one! Her true king! He leaned over her pillow! He peered into her face! And blind to earth though she was, those haunting eyes, so like her mother's, would not be shut out. There was somebody behind the boy, peeping over his shoulder! She could not see. But she felt it was somebody sad and stern. . . . One who had loved her best . . . her father!

Saturday morning dawned, still the Queen lived. Shrewsbury had been elected Lord Treasurer by a Council into which the Whig lords had forced their way, and Shrewsbury would raise no hand for the Stuarts.

The Queen, they said, was able to recognise him when he came to her bedside, and handing him the White Staff, bade him use it for the good of her people, whatever that cryptic admonition might mean. Perhaps the Queen was thinking of the sealed packet beneath her pillow, which would tell them what she wished when she was gone, when she need be a coward no more.

And now that the hour had come for a second Restoration, Masham and the Jacobites were in despair. A few days ago Oxford was in power, and he, if not their friend, was at least not strong enough to be a dangerous enemy. But to ruin him they had wrecked the cause they

loved; they had hastened the end, the end of everything, for nothing was ready.

In Masham's apartments at the Palace there was a conference, which continued throughout that long day. There was Ormonde, the man who, as Commander-in-Chief, held in his right hand the keys of the kingdom. There, too, were Lady Ormonde, and Lady Jersey, Buckinghamshire, and, boldest of all, Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, ready to go to the block for the cause with which his friend Sacheverell had made the kingdom ring. To Ormonde they looked for action; but Ormonde was the man to follow a lead, not to give one to a nation. The cause was in his hands, and he sat idly listening to the vain hopes and fears of women, and the debates of men whose business it was to talk. It was the moment for a soldier, and the soldier failed.

There were those there who wished, as well they might, for an hour of Marlborough—renegade and schemer though he was a hundred times. With what calm assurance would he muster the troops and unfurl the banner of his choice! But Marlborough was at Ostend, and here was the gentle Ormonde wondering what could be done, and doing nothing, while every regiment in the land was expecting the call. Buckinghamshire, happier with the poets than in a camp, but none the less as shrewd a fellow

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by Michael Dahl in the National Portrait Gallery.

JAMES BUTLER, SECOND DUKE OF ORMONDE, K.G.

p. 718.

as any in the land, showed Ormonde the road to fame. "My lord," he said, "you have twenty-four hours to do our business and make yourself master of the kingdom!" But in those fateful twenty-four hours Ormonde knew he might accomplish something less than his friend advised, and for that little his head might answer!

Kensington Palace was in truth the last serious battle-ground of the Stuart Cause. There it might have been won. There it was lost, and by Ormonde. The Bishop of London attended to prepare the Queen for her farewell to this world. To him she made a confession. What it was remains buried, like the secret of her will, in oblivion. As the Bishop left her he was heard to say: "Madam, I will obey your commands. I will declare your wishes, but it will cost me my head."

But history knows nothing of that declaration which was to have entailed so sad a martyrdom. Poor Anne! She had kept all her secrets to the end. She had kept them too well, for now who would dare to give them utterance? Who would undertake the atonement from which she had fled affrighted, as though England would not forgive the Queen it loved so well the sin of clinging to her own! Throughout her dying hours she sighed piteously for the outlaw upon whose head a price had been so lately set—and

her hand, now fast withering, had signed the deed that was so cruel an adieu.

"My poor brother—my dear brother," she wailed. And again, "What will become of you?"

It was her last message to her lords, but they did not heed; the last to England, but England did not know; her last act of contrition and, mayhap, it was not too late.

The August sun rose high above Park and Palace. The clock in the presence-chamber neared the hour. Haltingly it murmured seven as though in its sadness it would make each stroke a lifetime. Only a few minutes more remained. The Queen's heart-beat was but a flutter, but it fluttered for him, and would he not come! Would not a miracle happen, and James Stuart step forth from some undreamt-of hiding-place, some sliding panel of loyal oak, some mysterious Boscobel of the Palace Gardens, to claim his own, and soothe the misery of a dying Queen! Hark! Was that he at the gates? Was that his step pressing lightly the gravelled walk? But the oaken wainscot gave up no king! There was here no Pendrill to be his saviour, nor moss-grown tree to be a king's pavilion. The watchers in the Palace saw the gates stand stern and barred, the avenue without a sign of life save for the guards, haggard and grim after their all-night vigil, pacing doggedly to and fro, as

though death itself dare not beard such sentinels. . . . Then the few sands remaining trickled swiftly from the hour-glass, swiftly and silently, until the last golden grain of all sped away. . . . That was the final instant, and it had vanished. Anne Stuart was no more. She had called and called, and Jamie would not come to undo that black night's work when she had fled through the storm . . . to the storm, to the whirlwind! Now it was too late! And the race that was one by many a famous name and gallant deed with the world-old story of Britain's chivalry was banned and barred for ever.

With the last sigh, in which Anne's broken heart rested from its weary task, the long day of old England had set; and a new day, a new epoch was born, with a new chief, a new dynasty advancing through the gates of the dawn, the choice of Fate against as gallant cavaliers as ever were. It was a sunshine morn. Yet oh! so dark for many a gentle, many a gallant heart, as beyond the Park the drums rolled, the trumpets flourished, and the voices of the heralds arose, proclaiming that the Prince they loved, the Prince they would die for, was an outcast from his kingdom, that, an exile to the end, James the Third would never wear the Crown which was the symbol of his sister's sin and the instrument of her martyrdom.

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